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THE
HISTORICAL
JESUS OF NAZARETH.

M. SCHLESINGER, PH.D.



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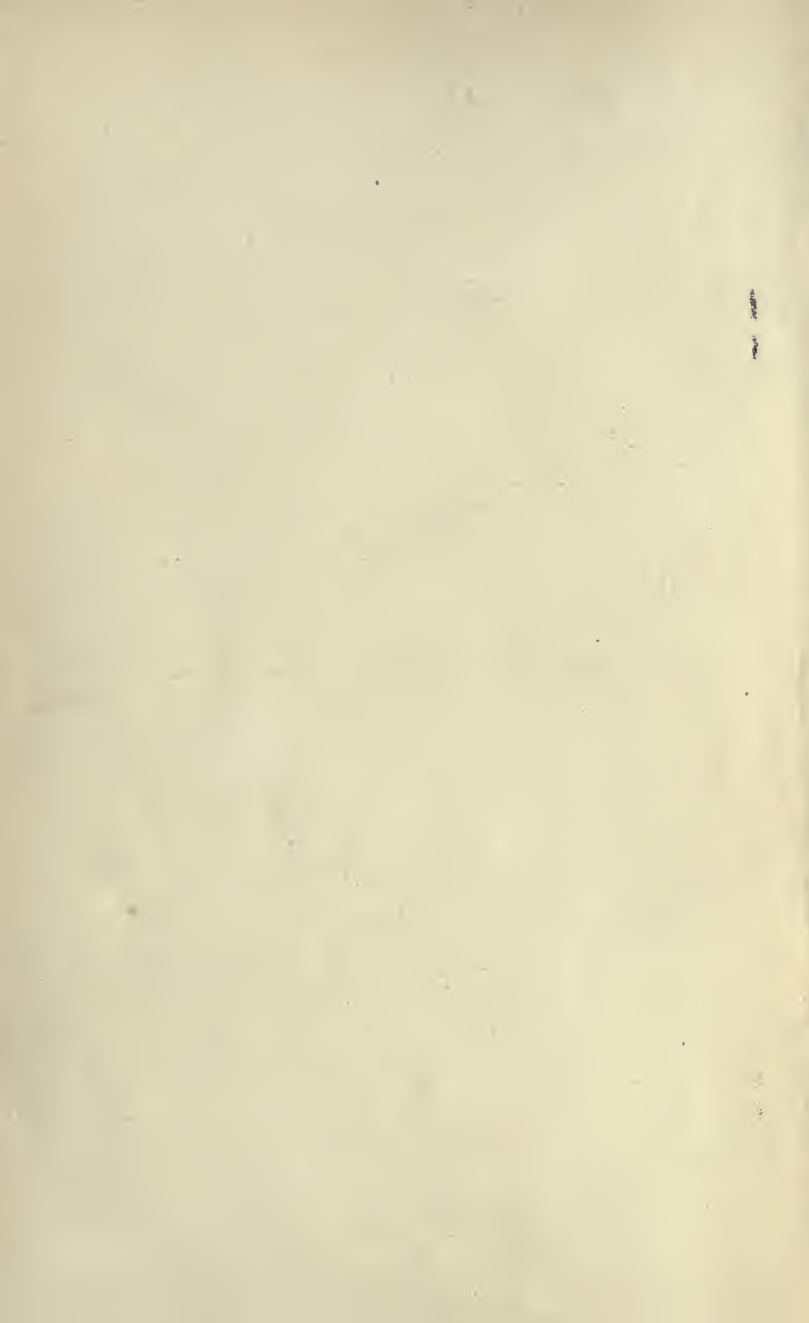
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BY
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RABBI OF THE CONGREGATION ANSHE EMETH, ALBANY, N. Y.



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PREFACE.

"IN a matter so solemn as that of religion, all men whose temporal interests are not involved in existing institutions earnestly desire to find the truth."* If this be so, as it surely ought to be, I need no apology for sending out the following pages to do their share in assisting men to find the truth.

Ours is prominently a practical age; the discoveries and inventions of every branch of science, no sooner made, are applied to the practical aims of daily life; every new idea is popularized and made the property of the millions. Only theology seems to make an exception. She, once the presiding mistress in the halls of science, is now scarcely recognized as entitled to admission. Yet, the discoveries of theology during the last decades are not less startling and suprising than those made in any other department of science. That they are less known is due partly to the theological bias of society, partly to the lack of popularization—or, rather, to both, for the one can only be eradicated by the other.

It is especially the origin of Christianity over which a flood of light has been poured by the exertions of modern *scientific* theology, and of which a more intimate knowledge must be desirable to every thinking man.

* Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, p. vi.

To give a brief survey of these discoveries, and at the same time to introduce the uninitiated into the very laboratory where they are distilled—of course, after removing every indication of the sweat and toil they have caused—is the aim of these pages.

1. The origin of Christianity is contained in the Messianic idea of Israel ; the one cannot be understood without a full appreciation of the other. We have, therefore, to trace the development of this idea from its incipient stages down to the time of Jesus.

2. Of Jesus and his time the New Testament alone gives us any records, which we must necessarily submit to a careful examination before forming any judgment of what they contain.

3. Having done this, we shall be enabled to sum up what a thorough and conscientious sifting has left as the truth, and finally conclude with the foundation of Christianity by Paul.

With this brief delineation of the course we intend to pursue, we mean to give timely warning to all those to whom it may be offensive. Not to offend, but humbly to contribute to the general enlightenment in so great and solemn a matter as religion, is our desire.

We have yet to state that, in citing the Scriptures, we were often compelled, for the sake of truth, to deviate from the authorized version of King James' Bible, and give our own translation from the original Hebrew and Greek. To assist the ordinary reader, however, we follow the division of chapters and verses of the common version.

Albany, October, 1875.



I.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MESSIANIC IDEA OF ISRAEL BEFORE JESUS.

THE peculiarity of Israel, so often noticed, but never fully explained, consists mostly in its Messianic idea. It is a people that cannot perish, because it is a people that lives for and by an ideal; an ideal, which, sufficiently grand and inspiring in its very beginning, did not shrink or fade with the intellectual advance and development of the people, but always evinced the capability of widening and expanding in grandeur with the widened and more advanced views of the people. The faith in the final realization of this ideal has endowed this people with that vitality and elasticity by which it defies and outlasts the ages.

What is the Messianic idea of Israel? Before we answer this question, we have to premise that, originally and fundamentally, it was not coupled with the idea of personality. The Messianic idea of Israel is but the outgrowth of the entirely optimistic bend of mind of the old Hebrews, which forced upon them the conviction that every thing God has made is "very good." Reality, the actual state of the world and society, contradicted, but could not shake, this conviction. The

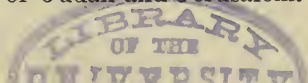
defective state of the world and society was too obvious not to be admitted, but only led to the proud thought that it was their (Israel's) destiny to lead the nations to a more perfect condition. This is distinctly announced at the very beginning of their history (Genesis xii. 3): "in thee all the generations of the earth shall be blest." All the laws, statutes and institutions of Moses are represented as given for the same purpose (Deut. iv. 6): "that they be your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations, who shall hear of all these statutes and say, Truly, it is a wise and understanding nation, this great people."

The Messianic idea, therefore, consists in this: *that the people of Israel, by propagating their laws and institutions among the nations, will become the savior of this world.* But the course of events did not justify this conception. The nations remained as they were, and, instead of being influenced, often influenced Israel by their idolatrous laws and institutions. To sustain the old hopes, it became necessary to call in the supernatural for their realization. It became the popular belief that this imperfect world would be destroyed and a new and perfect one be created. Before this was to take place, a day of judgment was expected, on which all those who did not accept the laws and institutions of Israel were to be judged.

The first account of this conception we find in the prophet Joel, who prophesied at the beginning of the reign of King Usia of Judah (about 800 B.C.) Palestine had been visited by unheard-of calamities: there was an earthquake which made the inhabitants reel on their feet, and the hills and mountains waver; thunder and lightning, together with the roaring and howling of

the sea, caused a deafening and maddening uproar ; the rising vapors darkened the sun and moon and stars ; it seemed as if their light had been withdrawn. This violent outburst passed ; but those who survived were to learn that the quietly destructive elements were still more to be dreaded. In consequence of the earthquake, the rain on which Palestine's fruitfulness depended failed, all the wells, and brooks, and rivulets were dried up, the people and their flocks languished, and even the wild beasts perished on the fields. The scorching sun sent down its fiery rays, and turned the fields, and meadows, and gardens into a wilderness. As if this were not enough, the hosts of locusts which generally haunt the Hauran, the northeast of Palestine, swarmed over like so many invincible armies, and greedily devoured every green leaf that was left. All hope was gone. But suddenly one of those tropical thunder-storms came, the terrible army of locusts was destroyed—washed away, or driven into the sea—and at the same time the land was refreshed, the wells were filled, the fields and gardens and meadows clad in fresh verdure, and men and beasts rejoiced over this sudden and unexpected deliverance.

If this world were to be destroyed—if “the last days” were to come—after this experience the popular expectation could take shape and form. And, indeed, the prophet Joel, who during these calamities had upheld the courage of the inhabitants in Judea, saw in all this but the faint promise of what would come to pass at “the end of days,” which end of days was always considered near at hand. He describes it (Joel iv. 1 ff.), “For behold, in those days and at that time, I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem.



And I will gather all nations and bring them down to the valley of Josaphat, and will plead with them there." (Iv. 9), "Proclaim ye this among the nations, prepare the war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near and go up." (Iv. 14), "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for near is the day of the Lord in the valley of decision. Sun and moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. For the Lord roars out of Zion, and from Jerusalem he sends forth his voice, and the heavens and the earth shall shake, but the Lord is refuge to his people and shelter to the children of Israel." And then (iii. 1 ff.), "I will pour out my spirit over all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall have visions. And also upon the servants and the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." This oldest description of the approach of "the end of days" became typical, and was only modified with the modification of the Messianic idea. In general it was expected that days of great and unprecedented trouble and misery would come, followed by the day of judgment, when all nations would be summoned to the valley of Josaphat (*i.e.*, "the Lord judges"); fierce battles would then take place, but the Lord's people would be victorious, and, thenceforth, the Lord would reign on Mount Zion, and his spirit rest upon every child of man.

The Messianic idea was first modified by Israel's political difficulties. The northern ten tribes had seceded from the southern tribes, and, consequently, from the national sanctuary in Jerusalem. This secession, together with the ambition to form political alliances, opened the gates to the abominations of the surrounding nations. The

consequence was that the inhabitants of the northern kingdom, the kingdom of Israel, soon became estranged from the faith of their fathers. This state of things had reached the climax under the magnificent reign of Jero-boam II. (830-769 B.C.), when religious decay and moral rottenness progressed so rapidly that all hopes were precluded. Joel's contemporaries, the prophets Amos and Hosea, who lived and prophesied in the kingdom of Israel, turned their eyes to the "fallen tabernacle of David," as their only hope. The breach which had rent the nation into two separate and often hostile parts, and which had become so fatal, not only to their political, but also to their religious, development, seemed irreparable; but it would be healed. When? Of course, in those days that were to come. Then the nation would again be reunited under the house of David. The Lord would raise up a second David, who, like the first, would unite all Israel under the banner of the Lord of Hosts; and, as this was to happen at "the end of days," he was expected to rule over all nations. The Messianic idea thus underwent the first great and important modification. Thenceforth it was assumed that, though the Lord was and would be the sole sovereign, he would transfer the ruling power of the mundane world to his anointed King (*i.e.*, Messiah). Here the personal Messiah came in, who was to be a descendant of David, the king who united all the tribes of Israel and ruled so gloriously that he lived in the memory of the people as "the man after the Lord's own heart." Now, only by the restoration of this house to the government of the whole nation, by "the sprouting of a branch out of Jesse's house," salvation was to be expected.

Amos prophesies (ix. 11 ff.): "In that day will I raise up

the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins and I will build it as in the days of old. . . . And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof, they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit thereof. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord."

And Hosea cannot often enough exhort Israel: (vi. 1), "Come, let us return"; (xiv 1.), "Return, O Israel, to the Eternal, thy God, for thou stumblest over thy iniquity"; (iii. 5), "At last the children of Israel will return and seek the Eternal, their God, and David, their king, at the end of days"; (i. 10, 11), "And it shall come to pass, instead of being called 'not my people,' they shall be called 'children of the living God'; then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel."

This modification of the Messianic idea, introduced by the northern prophets, was readily adopted by those prophesying in the kingdom of Judah, without, however, influencing their broader and more cosmopolitical conception. The grand old prophecy, as cited by Isaiah (ii. 2 ff.) and Micah (iv. 1 ff.), which some critics ascribe to Joel, always remained the basis on which the later prophets builded; viz.: "It shall come to pass at the end of days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke among many people, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." It was a proud but ennobling and elevating thought that out of Zion—*i.e.*, out of the midst of Israel—the law was to go forth which was to make the earth an habitation of peace and good-will under the divine rule; and, since the Messianic king out of the house of David was to be the visible head of the government, he became the king of peace and justice and love, the ideal of meekness and humility.

This somewhat-changed hope we find already distinctly stated by Zechariah I.* (ix. 1 ff.): "The word of the Lord: in the land of Hadrach and Damask will be his [the Lord's] resting-place, for to the Lord is turned the eye of all men, as that of all the tribes of Israel. Also in Hamath, which borders on it, and in Tyre and Zidon, which is very wise." Having announced the

* The book of Zechariah, as is well known, is not the work of one author; there are three little books compiled into one, probably because the prophets of all these speeches had the name of Zechariah. Chaps. i.-ix. are prophecies of Zechariah III., a prophet who returned with the Babylonian exiles and prophesied between 520-518 B.C. Chaps. ix.-xii. contain two speeches of Zechariah I., who lived and prophesied between 748-727 B.C. Chaps. xii.-xiv. form the separate little book of Zechariah II., who lived and prophesied immediately before the destruction of Jerusalem, between 590-588 B.C.

Lord's rebuke to the wicked of these nations, the prophet continues (ix. 7 ff.): "Their bloody deeds I take away out of their mouth, and their abominations from between their teeth, and it will also remain to our Lord, and it will be like a tribe of Judah, and Ekron like Jebusi [*i.e.*, Jerusalem]. . . . Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just and victorious, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. For I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river [Euphrates] to the ends of the earth."

Isaiah I.,* the most influential of all the prophets, went still further; he, for the first time, connected these hopes with a distinct personality; viz.: King Hezekiah (724-696 B.C.). Time and circumstances seemed to justify his hopes. Under Hezekiah's father, the weak Ahaz (739-725 B.C.), the surrounding nations, led by Rezin, king of Damask, and Pekah, king of Israel, had conspired, not only to make war against Judah, but to dethrone the house of David and put in its place a certain Ben-Tobal (Isaiah vii. 1-7). Ahaz was in despair, the population trembled, only the prophet Isaiah was confident of the

* The book of Isaiah is likewise composed of the products of various authors, which, however, can be divided in two parts, chaps. i.-xl. and xl.-lxvi. The first part, chaps. i.-xxxv., contains mostly the speeches of Isaiah I., who prophesied between 755-709 B.C., though some parts of these speeches must be of later date; to this are added the historical chapters xxxv.-xl. The second part, chaps. xl.-lxvi., belongs mostly to an unknown prophet, probably likewise of the name of Isaiah, who lived among the Babylonian exiles shortly before their return to Palestine; he is called Isaiah II.

assistance of the Lord. In his speech to the wavering and unbelieving king, he gives him as a sign (Isaiah vii. 14 ff.): "Behold, this young woman" [pointing to a young woman in the crowd; the erroneous translation of the Hebrew *Almah* with virgin is too well known as such to need correction] "shall conceive and bear a son, whose name she shall call Emanuel" [God with us], "for he shall witness the misery breaking upon the people and also the salvation of the Lord." The salvation came; Ahaz was delivered from his enemies; but, instead of strengthening himself by the national faith, he thought it more political to introduce the Assyrian idolatry; the gods of his master were also to be his gods, and Judah became as idolatrous as Ephraim. The faithful would have been driven to despondency if it had not been for the hopes they placed in the coming king, the young, hopeful, and promising prince Hezekiah, who probably was under Isaiah's tuition. He was to be the Messiah, and of him Isaiah sings (ix. 2 ff.): "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them has light risen. . . . For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government is on his shoulder, and his name is called Wonder, Counsellor, Mighty One of the Lord, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. To increase the government and never-ending peace upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it and found it on judgment and justice for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." It seemed as if the prophet's hopes were literally to be fulfilled, for soon the great catastrophe, so long foretold by the former prophets, took place. The kingdom of Israel was destroyed (720 B.C.)—"the land had spewed out the

people on account of their wickedness." The faithful that were left of Israel now joined Judah; in Judah and Jerusalem the Jehovistic party came into ascendancy, and, to a certain extent, Ephraim and Judah were indeed reunited under one just and righteous king of the house of David. But, alas! it was not even the shadow of all those bright hopes entertained by the people and their prophets. Hezekiah was a good, pious and virtuous king, but not equal to the many adverse circumstances that surrounded him; he was not what Isaiah had hoped and expected.

The prophet's and the people's hopes, however, remained unshaken; they were only pushed forward to a more distant future. To this the prophet gives utterance in one of his latest prophecies (xi. 1 ff.): "A rod shall come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, . . . and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

The same hopes inspired Isaiah's younger contemporary, Micah, who shows himself a worthy pupil of the master he imitates. As Isaiah, so does *he* refer to the old prophecy of the general kingdom of peace (Micah iv. 1 ff.); he even enlarges upon it by adding "and then every man shall sit under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall disturb, for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it. For let all the nations walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Eternal, our God, forever and ever" [that is to say, though on different roads, all nations will at last meet at the same goal]. "In that day I will gather those that halt, and bring in those who were cast off, and those I have afflicted, and the Eternal shall reign over them on Mount Zion from then to evermore." As Isaiah prophesies of the child that is yet to be born, Micah likewise speaks (v. 3): "how they are delivered up until she that travaileth shall have brought forth." As Isaiah looks for the branch that is to rise out of the stem of Jesse, whose original domicile was Bethlehem in Judah, Micah likewise exclaims (v. 2): "And thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth that is to be ruler in Israel, whose going forth hath been from old, from everlasting." We need not say that these prophecies of Isaiah and Micah which speak of King Hezekiah greatly influenced the views of later generations about the Messiah. It became part and parcel of the Messianic belief that the Messiah was not only to be a branch out of the root of Jesse, but was also to be born in Bethlehem; hence the legends in the New Testament of the descent and birth of Jesus. Nor is it necessary

to mention that the *Almah* of Isaiah was afterward employed to justify the later Christian doctrine of a Virgin-mother of God.

How tenaciously the Messianic idea clung to Israel is best seen in their greatest calamity. Jeremiah (627-570 B.C.), the gloomiest of the prophets, who had seen the misery of his people, which he was doomed to announce for many years to an infatuated and unbelieving crowd—even he had confidence in a glorious restoration. He describes it (xxxiii. 14 ff.): “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, I will cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith he shall be called, ‘the Lord our righteousness.’ For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.” Notwithstanding the derision of the people (xxxiii. 20–1), he remains hopeful: “Thus speaks the Lord, if ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David, my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne.” But the woe and misery of the Captivity which was then staring in the face of the nation again caused a change, and that a very ennobling one, in the original conception of the Messianic idea. The more thoughtful became convinced that the Messianic time could only be brought about by a moral elevation of the whole nation; that purity of heart and soul, of intention and action, must be

the root out of which the Messianic time would spontaneously grow and blossom, and bring the noble fruits promised by former prophets. We find it first expressed in Jeremiah (xxx. 31 ff.): "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not as the covenant which I made with their fathers in the days that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which covenant they brake so that I loathed them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. I will put my law in their inward parts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And then they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know ye the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and will remember their sin no more."

This new light in which henceforth the Messianic idea appeared, "that by a pure heart on which the law of the Lord was indelibly engraved" they could hasten the days of the Messiah, was sufficient to illumine the darkness of the Captivity, into which they went downcast, but not hopeless. The Captivity did not impair, but rather fostered, the old hopes, as days of great and unparalleled calamities were thought to be the indispensable precursor of the Messiah.

The prophet of the Captivity, Ezekiel, who prophesied between 593-570 B.C., gives evident proof of this. He closely followed in the footprints of Jeremiah, whose pupil he probably was, and reiterated still more emphatically the change of heart and mind which were necessary for Israel before salvation would be possible. The

burden of his hopes for the future is everywhere the same (xxxvi. 24 ff.): "For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your land. Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my people and I will be your God." (xxxiv. 23 ff.): "And I will set up one shepherd over them and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them and he shall be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace."

Ezekiel does not speak of a Messiah-King; David is prince, the first among equals in the kingdom of the Lord. With the destruction of the commonwealth of Judah (586 B.C.) and the Babylonian exile the royalistic tendency of the Messianic hopes loses ground, and the idea again widens to its original, universal, and cosmopolitical meaning, as we shall see in its subsequent development. But yet another thing is here to be observed. With Ezekiel it is no longer a branch that is to rise out of the house of David; it is David himself, who is to be raised up (from the dead). The Messianic idea has again to adapt itself to a new conception.

The belief stated in Ecclesiastes (xii. 7), "and dust

returneth unto dust as it was, but the spirit returneth unto Him who gave it," *i.e.*, the belief in the immortality of the soul, was always held in Israel as a self-evident truth. Among the Parsees of Babylonia they met with a new idea, closely allied to that of immortality, which they seized eagerly; it was that of the resurrection of the dead. There must have been an inner want and urgency for such a ready adoption of a foreign idea, generally so repulsive to Israel, and this we can easily explain. The present generation, despairing of ever seeing the realization of their hopes, yet longing for it with all their hearts, fondly embraced a conception according to which the fulfillment of their hopes was insured against all casualties. The time of the Messiah is long delayed; they will probably not live to see it; but no matter—they will all participate in the good things which he will bring about here on earth; the resurrection of the dead will restore the good and pious of all generations to a new life here on earth.* Ezekiel, in his renowned vision (xxxvii. 1–15), sees the whole nation rise out of their graves and become united

* It took a long time before this new and foreign conception of immortality, though blended with the so-much-cherished Messianic hopes, became the belief of the whole nation. At the time of Jesus there were especially the Sadducees who repudiated resurrection. The Sadducees, satisfied with the aristocratic position they occupied, were not desirous of a new state of things which the Messiah was to bring about, and therefore smilingly and incredulously looked upon the Messianic hopes of the people. But the Pharisees, who were advocating the equality and priestly sanctity of the whole people—which, if not now, was to be brought about at the time of the Messiah—welcomed the belief in resurrection as a consolation for their present disappointment; wherefore they made it one of their doctrines, which, in the course of time, became a kind of dogma.

under the one shepherd David, who will lead and feed his flock.

Ezekiel, discarding the branch that is to rise out of the house of David, speaks of David as of one who is to rise from the dead with all the rest of the righteous; but Isaiah II., the great agitator of the Captivity, who never tires of encouraging the wavering and faint-hearted exiles, now chiding with his deep-cutting sarcasm, now inspiring by the sweet strains of his magnificent poetry, assumes a far loftier position. Neither the house of David nor David is mentioned any longer; he sees the Messiah in Cyrus, the victorious king of Persia, who will break down Babylonia, Israel's house of bondage, loosen the chains of the captives, set them free, and restore the old glory of Zion (Isaiah xxxiii. 1 ff.; xlv. 1 ff.): "Thus saith the Lord to his Messiah, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut; . . . that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, who hath called thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: . . . I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me. I guided thee, though thou hast not known me. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. . . . (xlvii. 4): "As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel." He sees the returned exiles with joy and glory come to Zion, and sings (lii. 7 ff.), "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that

saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice ; together shall they sing ; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion." To him the coming salvation is no longer national, but universal (lvi. 6 ff.) : " Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant ; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer ; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon my altar ; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. The Lord God, who gathereth the exiled of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him beside those that are gathered to him."

Alas ! reality did not come up to his beautiful dreams. Indeed, Cyrus permitted Israel to return ; but very few of the Babylonian exiles could be induced to participate in the establishment of the new heavenly kingdom. He had to feel the pangs of hopes long deferred ; still the prophet's confidence in a coming time of universal peace and love and justice was as little shaken as that of the first Isaiah, when disappointed in his Messiah, King Hezekiah. He returns (lxv. 8-25) to the last hopes of his illustrious predecessor ; in the distant future he sees accomplished what his sluggish contemporaries did not desire to gain for themselves. In his last prophecy he again announces the day of judgment, after which all nations will come up to Jerusalem (lxvi. 23) : " And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord."

Henceforth David's house, formerly such a prominent

element of the Messianic idea, loses more and more of its importance. Only Haggai and Zechariah III. faintly refer to him, as Zerubbabel, one of the two leaders of the returned exiles, was of David's house. Haggai says (ii. 23): "On that day, saith the Lord of hosts, I will take Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, my servant, saith the Lord, and I will make thee as a seal; for thee I have chosen, saith the Lord." And Zechariah III. (vi. 12): "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the man [Zerubbabel] whose name is The Branch, for from under him it shall branch forth, and he shall build the temple of the Lord." It was the restoration of the temple and the Jehovah-cult that was most at the heart of the new generation; and therefore Zerubbabel, the branch out of the house of David, was overshadowed by Joshua, the son of Yotsadak; the priestly family supersedes the royal; not the temporal, but the spiritual influence which Israel will exercise over the nations is now emphasized: "when the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Very significant for these changed hopes are the words of the last of the prophets, Malachi. He does not expect a Messiah-King, but a messenger, a forerunner, who is to prepare Israel, or the world, for the great day of the Lord, when *he* will come and judge and then rule alone. This messenger is no longer the anointed king, the Messiah, but Elijah the prophet (Mal. iv. 5): "Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with ban."

The history of Israel during the next three hundred

years, from the restoration of the second temple to the Maccabean era (500–175 B.C.), shows almost a blank. It was a period of rest and quietude, so necessary for every rejuvenescence. The Jewish colonies in Palestine were too insignificant to aspire to any political importance, and therefore willingly resigned themselves to the supremacy of the great world-powers that superseded each other; they were loyal subjects: first, of the Persians; then the Macedonians, under Alexander the Great; and, after his death, willingly submitted to his successors in Egypt and Syria. The bright hopes which the enthusiastic prophets had upheld were in glaring contrast to their insignificance; there were too many little practical aims which required all their attention, and no leisure nor inclination was left for dreams of a dim future. Nevertheless, this period of seeming relaxation was well employed. During this time the Mosaic laws and institutions were developed, and became so deeply rooted in the mind and heart of the people, that they, who formerly always relapsed into idolatry, who always needed the chastening rod of the prophets, henceforth showed themselves the most faithful keepers and preservers of “the law” and the belief in the one spiritual God of Israel. This faith and law became dearer to them than country and nationality and political importance. Therefore, when Antiochus Epiphanes (176–164 B.C.) threatened to deprive the Jewish colonies in Palestine of this inheritance, the old heroism was re-awakened. Such a time of cruel oppression and persecution, followed by glorious victories of the few undisciplined patriots over the magnificent and dreaded armies of the Syrians, naturally recalled the old Messianic hopes of the people. The book of Daniel, written



at that time, interprets the national feeling of those days. To enlist at once the interest of his contemporaries, the author ascribes his book to a certain Daniel who lived during the Babylonian captivity. The first chapters contain stories and legends apt to encourage the people in their perseverance to obey the law of the Lord, in spite of the oppression and persecution of the rulers, which, the author is convinced, cannot last forever. To give a *demonstratio ad hominem*, he represents the past as well as the future history of Israel in prophetic visions, ascribed to Daniel in Babylonia. Now, since the past has been fulfilled according to these visions, the predictions of the future will undoubtedly likewise be true (Dan. vii. 7). The four beasts are the four kingdoms of Babylonia, Media, Persia and Macedonia. They destroy each other and vanish, until, on the day of judgment, they are all punished; but then (Dan. vii. 13, 14), "with the clouds of heaven there came one like the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The "Son of Man," who is to come with the clouds of heaven, is only a poetic expression for "the people of Israel," as the explanation given to Daniel explicitly states (vii. 27), "and the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."

The Messianic idea had again changed. This time the change effected a return to the original conception

of the Messianic idea, according to which *the people of Israel* was to become the savior of the nations, by bringing to them the law of love, justice and righteousness, and thus preparing the world for the heavenly kingdom that was to be established here on earth. Similar efforts we notice in former periods (*f.i.* Isaiah liii. 2 ff.); but such a conception could be brought home to the heart of the whole people only after the preceding centuries of quiet preparation. Henceforth we find the personal Messiah no longer mentioned; neither the book of Daniel, the Apocrypha, nor the Sybillines speak of him. But the doctrine that all the good, pious and virtuous, who were helping to prepare this heavenly kingdom would surely participate in it, *i.e.*, the doctrine of the resurrection, we find in Daniel, for the first time, authoritatively announced (Dan. xii. 1, 2): "and at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of the people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

This ardent desire for the day of judgment, and the heavenly kingdom that was to follow, soon cooled off considerably in the next century under the Maccabees, when the people enjoyed an unwonted prosperity and independence. We see it best from two striking incidents related in the first book of Maccabees (iv. 46): "and they laid up the stones [of the altar which the heathen had defiled] in the mountain of the temple, in a convenient place, until there should come *a prophet* to

show what should be done with them." The same we find again at the election of Simon as high priest and ruler (xiv. 41): "also that the Jews and priests were well pleased that Simon should be their governor and high priest forever, until there should arise a *faithful prophet*." Henceforth the formula of the Messianic belief was: "The prophet Elijah will come to spread light and truth, restore everything to its true and proper position, right all those who were wronged, bring near all those that were removed" (Babylonian Talmud Aduyoth viii. 7). The state of affairs under the Maccabees was considered temporary; but, as it proved quite satisfactory, the hopes for a different future became more and more theoretical only.

This, however, changed entirely when Herod seized upon the government (37-4 B.C.) He was of foreign (Idumean) descent; instead of the lion of Judah, the jackal of Idumea had assumed the power, and, with his craftiness and cunning, was undermining the mountain of the Lord. With the same cruelty and unscrupulousness with which he had extirpated the ruling high-priest family of the Maccabees, he now oppressed the people. To do this securely, he was compelled to lean on the all-powerful Romans, and acknowledge them his and his country's lord and master. Under his successors, who inherited all of his vices, but none of his virtues, Palestine was made a Roman province, where Roman oppression and greediness vied with that of the Herodians to drive the people to despair. At the time of Jesus, days again came when the Jews of Palestine could think of the future only with trembling and despondency. The iron heel of the Romans was upon their neck; they were prostrated, and had not the power

to rise; their foremost men, the aristocracy and priestly families, fawned for the oppressor's smiles; the different parties were in continual controversy and enmity—what was yet to be hoped for? This world was ripe to perish, and the new world, of which the prophets had spoken so enthusiastically, if it ever was to come, must now surely come. But it could be brought about only by a strict observance of the Mosaic law, and by conscientiously living up to it; therefore repentance and greater piety of the whole people were necessary. Prophets like John the Baptist arose, who exhorted the people to repent and return to the Lord, for the kingdom of the Lord was near at hand; enthusiastic fanatics, like Judah of Galilee, the founder of the Zealots party, repudiated the rulers of this world, and declared it sinful to pay tribute to the Romans. Such agitators, with their religious enthusiasm, their burning patriotism, and intense hatred of both native and foreign oppressors, stirred up the common people to a feverish restlessness, and the old hopes for the coming of a Messiah and deliverer were revived. Even of those who led a more quiet and retired life, many were nourishing the fond hope in their bosom that things could not continue this way much longer (Luke ii. 34). This corrupt world must soon perish and the heavenly kingdom commence.*

* To counteract this excitement among the lower classes, which, under the Roman Government, might become pernicious to the whole nation, the better and more educated were driven bluntly to deny the hope of a Messiah. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 99 a.) gives no less an authority than Hillel for the remarkable assertion: "Israel has no longer to expect a Messiah, as he has come already in the days of Hezekiah"; that is to say, the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the Messiah refer to King Hezekiah only. Later generations, who did not understand this timely opposition

The leaders and agitators were confident in their expectation, but none of them aspired to more than to prepare the people for the coming of the heavenly kingdom ; the title and office of the Messiah remained vacant, without finding one so bold as to claim it for himself. The first who, after long hesitation and wavering, did claim it was Jesus of Nazareth.

to the wild hopes of the ignorant crowds, censured Hillel for his bold assertion. Rabbi Joseph said, "May the Lord forgive Hillel this error, for did not King Hezekiah live at the time of the first temple ? Yet prophets living at the time of the second temple, for instance, Zechariah, prophesied the coming of the Messiah." This denial of the Messianic hopes by Hillel and his school is very significant and extremely important for a correct conception of the days immediately preceding those of Jesus.

II.

NEW TESTAMENT LITERATURE.

WHO was Jesus of Nazareth, and what were his aims and claims? This can only be ascertained from the writings which compose the so-called New Testament; for all other records which we possess of those days—it is very remarkable—pass him over with profound silence. Now, turning to these only sources of information, we unfortunately find them so full of contradictions, that, at the first glance, it seems impossible to obtain the truth from such witnesses. No wonder that the verdicts of those who listened to them have been as various as the various dispositions brought to the examination. The orthodox Christian takes every word they say for divinely inspired truth, no matter how impossible it may be; and “gospel truth” has become proverbial in more than one sense. The skeptic, on the other hand, asserts that truth can never be elicited from such partial testimony, which is but fit matter for mockery and ridicule. Neither of these, however, is a competent judge; the only competent judge was born in our century. It is critical science; and, indeed, it is surprising what she has been able to ascertain by merely placing these various witnesses on their true standpoint.

The process by which science arrived at her remarkable results is simple enough. She followed her lead-

ing principle: to find the truth no matter to what consequences it might lead, or what cherished prejudices and superstitions might be overthrown. Without any preconceptions she commenced anew the whole work of examining, comparing and sifting the testimony; and thus, by scrupulously weighing the evidence, and laboriously bringing together the minutest data, the perplexing chaos was reduced to order, and the mist that hovered over this most important epoch of the history of mankind was dispelled. The result is, that instead of a supernatural interference of the Divine will, we now see nothing but the natural evolution of certain effects from certain causes; instead of a monotonous unity and harmony between the founders of Christianity, we see a very animated struggle for existence between the various parties which the new creed naturally called forth.

It is impossible to give an adequate idea of the vast amount of talent, labor, and patience required for such researches; yet, it is but within the last forty years that all this has been achieved. It was in the year 1835 that David Friedrich Strauss published his critical "Life of Jesus," and thereby conclusively showed to every one who was willing to see that the four Gospels contain mostly a web of myth and legend, woven and patterned according to the conceptions of the respective authors, and the requirements of the time and party to which they belonged. But how are we to trace the different threads and explain the various colors that have been used? Where are we to get the standard by which to judge their workmanship, and to a certainty distinguish the historical from the legendary? These perplexing questions were answered effectively by Ferdinand Christian Baur, the

ingenious teacher of Strauss. He first called attention to the four epistles of Paul—the one to the Romans, the two to the Corinthians, and the one to the Galatians—which admit of no doubt concerning their historical authenticity. Examining these letters, written twenty years after the crucifixion (that is, about 50 A.C.), what do we find? Fierce and animated struggles between two very distinct and outspoken parties of young Christianity. Paul, in all his epistles, contended against *another gospel and another doctrine*, which differed decidedly from what he was teaching to his converts.

And what was this different gospel? It was the gospel as preached during the time prior to Paul's assuming the office and title of apostle; it was the gospel as taught to the church in Jerusalem by Peter and John and James, the brother of Jesus; it was the gospel which the disciples who personally attended Jesus declared to be that of Jesus. Paul's gospel is entirely his own, as he himself declares that he never condescended to learn from man (Gal. i. 12, 16, 17); that is to say, from those disciples who personally attended Jesus. Not until the third year of his apostleship was he moved to go from Damascus to Jerusalem. He found the atmosphere of the original church so uncongenial that he kept aloof from it, and only conversed with Peter and James; and after remaining but two weeks, he departed, somewhat disgusted, to resume his own gospel with renewed vigor in Antioch. His is the gospel to the heathen world which declares "the law" abolished, and in the epistle to the Galatians even as a hindrance to the true belief in Christ. This doctrine amazed the Jew-Christians in Jerusalem. Many of these frequently came to Antioch, others were purposely sent, and there arose endless

quarrels. Paul's new converts were estranged from him ; and he was represented, by those who ought to know best, as a heretic, whose doctrine was entirely and fundamentally opposed to that of Jesus, his true disciples and followers. Paul, therefore, to make an end of these vexations, felt constrained to go to Jerusalem, and lay his doctrine and plan of converting the heathen world before Peter, James, and John—before “those who seemed to be pillars of the church,” or “the very chiefest of the apostles,” as he sometimes ironically calls them. After very stormy debates, a compromise was agreed upon (Gal. ii. 7–10); they gave him the right hand of fellowship. Paul was to be acknowledged as the apostle of the heathen, while Peter was to remain the apostle of the Jews. How weak this compromise was in establishing peace between the two opposing parties, is to be seen from the fact that, very soon after this, Paul was again involved in ugly quarrels, and this time with Peter himself, whom he charges with hypocrisy (Gal. ii. 11–13): “But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the very face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James he did eat with the Gentiles ; but when they had come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him ; insomuch that Barnabas [his faithful companion] also was carried away with their dissimulation.”

How strong and powerful this anti-Pauline party must have been, we may conclude from the influence they exerted even in the churches founded by Paul. Not only in Antioch, which could easily be reached from Jerusalem, but also in Corinth, he had the same adversaries and the

same struggles. In Corinth was the church which he loved most, loved with a passion and jealousy that could not be surpassed by the most enamored youth. How often he prays in his epistles (1 Cor. iv. 16; xi. 1), "Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me;" how often he assures them (2. Cor. vii. 3), "ye are in our hearts to die and to live with you"; how he glories in them (1 Cor. ix. 1): "are not ye my work in the Lord?" (2 Cor. ii. 4): "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." Nothing pains him more than that they also should desert him and his gospel. (1 Cor. ix. 2): "If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you." (2 Cor. xii. 11): "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest of the apostles, though I be nothing." Yet he has scarcely departed and gone to Ephesus, when he again learns how his opponents, even in this his pet church, are becoming stronger and stronger; there are already many who say "I am of Cephas," *i.e.*, Peter (1 Cor. i. 12). These opponents decry him in every way; they deny him the title of apostle, and speak of him slightly as of one who has no authority (2 Cor. xii. 11; xi. 4, 12, 18 ff.), while they come well recommended from the very pupils of Jesus in Jerusalem (2 Cor. x. 12 ff.); they call him the corrupter of the Gospel (2 Cor. x. 2, 7): "But I beseech you that I may not be bold, when I am present, with that confidence wherewith I think to be bold against *some* who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh." "If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that as *he* is Christ's,

even so are *we* Christ's." They mock the bombastic style of his epistles, contrasting it with his personal appearance and heavy speech (2 Cor. x. 10): "For his letters, they say, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible." The bitterness wherewith he defends himself, and entreats his Corinthians to remain faithful to him, shows how influential his opponents must have been (2 Cor. xi. 2): "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy" (2 Cor. xi. 4 ff.): "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit which ye have not received, or another gospel which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles. But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been made thoroughly manifest among you in all things," and so on through the whole chapter.

The whole burden of his epistle to the Romans—a church risen from among the many Jews in Rome, without the effort of any of the apostles—is nothing but the defence of his doctrine, which declares that the Gospel was sent to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, and therefore "the law" must be superseded by faith. There were undoubtedly evil reports of him spread among them (Rom. iii. 8), which he wished to dispel before coming to them, as he intended to do after his journey to Jerusalem. He thought he could conciliate his opponents in Jerusalem by bringing them the rich contributions he had gathered from among his heathen converts for the "poor saints" in Jerusalem, as he had promised to do when the compromise (Gal. ii. 10) between him and the original apostles was accomplished, and which,

indeed, he very zealously did. He came triumphantly to Jerusalem, but his reception was far from what he expected. The money he brought was called a bait held out by him to the true apostles, that they might acknowledge his title of apostle and admit him to their ranks. Thus, hated by the Jews as an apostate, and by his own church as a heretic, he fell into the hands of the Romans, who brought him first to Cæsarea, and then to prison in Rome, from which he was never released.

This is the plain and simple story of the first generations after Jesus which we read from Paul's epistle. But quite a different story of the same days is offered to us in the Acts, its next-door neighbor. In Paul's epistles everything occurs naturally, without the interference of signs and wonders; we see and hear real men acting, disputing, reasoning; all the human passions are brought into play, and a picture is unfolded which corresponds exactly to our own daily experiences. But how different in the Acts, which pretends to relate the same events! There we see angels and spirits, heaven and earth, set in motion to interfere with and participate in the actions of man; everything appears in the garb of the supernatural, marvelous, and miraculous. More yet: the characters of the actors, which in Paul's epistles stand out in such bold relief, how indistinct and unnatural they are rendered in the Acts! Science could not be in doubt. While Paul's epistles decidedly bear the stamp of truth and reality, just as decidedly do the Acts bear the stamp of a fictitious and artificial narration, made up for certain purposes.

Every careful reader will at once observe that the Acts are divided into two distinct parts; the first (chapters i.-xiii.) having Peter for its hero, and the second

(chapters xiii.-xxviii.), Paul. All the wonders ascribed to Peter in the first part are repeated in the second in a somewhat different way, and ascribed to Paul. Peter, who, according to Paul's epistles, is afraid to keep company with the heathen (Gal. ii. 12), and who, according to the compromise (*ibid.* 8, 9) was to have the apostleship unto circumcision, is made the apostle of the Gentiles (Acts xv. 7). He and James, whose followers caused Paul so much trouble in Antioch, all at once become the defenders of Paul's doctrine (Acts xv. 8-22), which, it is true, is not stated with the harsh and cutting distinctness of Paul's epistles, but gracefully makes the concession, that the heathen converts "should abstain from pollution of idols and from fornication and from things strangled and from blood" (Acts xv. 20, 29); that is to say, should observe all those laws which the so-called "stranger of the gate" had to observe among the Jews.

On the other hand, Paul's unyielding character and combativeness, his feeling of superiority visible in every word of his epistles, have entirely vanished. Paul (Gal. i. 11-12) says: "But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (*Ibid.* 15-18): "But when it pleased God . . . To reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me," etc. (Gal. ii. 5-6): "To whom [the original apostles] we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you. But of those, who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it makes no matter to me: God ac-

cepteth no man's person ; for they who seemed to be somewhat, in conference added nothing to me." This same Paul is represented in the Acts as humbly and meekly seeking their company, and is very glad to be introduced to them by Barnabas, his sub-apostle (Acts. ix. 26-27) : " And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples ; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way." Paul, who firmly withstood the demand of the Jew-Christians to have his companion Titus circumcised ; who gloried that the other apostles, seeing his success, had to yield to him (Gal. ii. 3-9), is made meekly to submit to the demands of the conference ; and, by a kind of dissimulation, to pacify the cries of the people (Acts. xxi. 18-26).

It is evident that such an intentional transformation of characters can only have been undertaken to serve certain purposes, which we now perfectly understand. It is this: ever since Paul had commenced his mission to the heathen, with declaring " the law " [*i.e.*, Judaism] not only as supplanted, but as adverse to what he conceived Christianity to be, the original apostles stood aghast ; there was nothing which could bridge the gulf between their Christianity as received from Jesus, and that as thought by Paul. Paul's immense success with the Gentiles, however, commanded respect, and gained him toleration with the moderates. But the extremists hated him with the most bitter hatred, and ascribed to him the worst that they could think of (we have an example of this spirit in the Revelations). Epithets were given to him like Balaam, sorcerer, corrupter ; travesties were

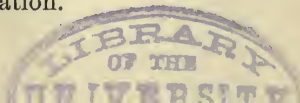
fabricated to make him hateful and ridiculous, of which the best known was that, where Paul appears in the guise of the Samaritan sorcerer Simon. It is a whole romance which finally tells how Simon offers to Peter many treasures, as a bribe to receive him among the apostles, but is put to shame by Peter. Everybody can here recognize Paul, who, like the Samaritans, was teaching a religion half Jewish and half heathenish; whose miracles were but sorcery; and who brought rich gifts to Jerusalem from his converted heathens, which, instead of being gratefully received, were rejected.

This anti-Pauline party was powerful during the first century after Jesus, and penetrated even into the churches founded by Paul himself. But after the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, when the Jew-Christians gave up their hopes and expectations of seeing Jerusalem, the capital of the world, to which Jesus was to come down with the clouds of heaven, and reign forever over both Jews and Gentiles; when the conversion of *all* the Jews was to be given up as hopeless, while so many heathen were joining: there began a reaction, and the Pauline doctrine came into ascendancy, the more the Jew-Christian influence declined.

Still, a party does not die out in a day, especially a religious party. A compromise was to be made, and this compromise was accomplished in a remarkably skillful manner by the author of the Acts. According to his representation of the past (he wrote at the beginning of the second century about 110 A.C.), not only Paul but Peter, the representative of Jew-Christianity, was likewise the apostle of the heathen; not only Paul; but Peter likewise, receives the revelation of the abolition of the law, and the election of the heathen (Acts x).

Both are made of equal importance ; to both the same miracles are ascribed ; as friends and brothers they now go hand in hand ; and it is no wonder that soon all of the more important churches boast of being founded by both these leading apostles, Peter and Paul. Their dispute in Antioch is entirely omitted, and in its place a dispute, which Paul is said to have had with Barnabas, his most faithful follower, is inserted (Acts xv. 39). The current story of the Samaritan sorcerer Simon, whom Peter punishes, is told of another Simon, and introduced (Acts viii. 13–24) before Paul enters the arena. The Jew-Christians could now be satisfied ; their own apostle had stood up for the doctrines they repudiated, which doctrines, greatly modified, were no longer set forth with that opinionativeness as in Paul's epistles ; neither was Paul a heretic, but a true apostle, like James and John and Peter ; why should they not yield and combine with the Paulines ? There is no jarring, no strife, no contention between these apostles ; there is nothing but harmony and brotherhood, and—the foundation of the Catholic Church is laid.

The secret of all the contradictions between Paul's epistles and the Acts is disclosed. We now clearly see that only from Paul's epistles can we learn the historical facts ; but on this account we shall by no means ill-humoredly call the author of the Acts a falsifier of history ; his purpose was not to write history, but to pacify, to conciliate, and to compromise. How difficult and delicate his task must have been we can learn from the vehemence of the spirit that opposed him. Fortunately the writings of the New Testament have preserved a specimen of this spirit in the Revelation.



But what can we make out of the Revelation? A book which seems rather to conceal than to reveal its real meaning and intent. Yet, when we consider the strange fate of this book (which, during the first generations after its appearance, was so much loved and so well understood by its numerous readers, while later generations misused it for their own fantastic dreams, or treated it so contemptuously—as, for instance, Luther—that they almost threw it out of the canon), we surmise that, if the key to its secrets were found, it would again become both intelligible and instructive. The great merit of modern science is strikingly shown in the ease with which she removed the seals that closed this book to our understanding. As long as the Apocalypse was taken for a revelation of the future, it remained as dark and unintelligible as the future itself; but as soon as science looked within its pages for a revelation of its own time, it became marvelously clear and instructive; so much so that the date of its composition could be defined within a few months.

When the author of the Apocalypse writes (xvii. 9), “And here is the mind which has wisdom,” he surely did not think of modern science; nevertheless, this is the mind which has the wisdom to understand him when he continues, “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth,” that this woman is none else but Rome, as he explains (xvii. 18): “And the woman whom thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” It is Rome during the first persecution of the Christians under Nero in the year 64 A.C., when he says (xvii. 6): “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus.” It is Rome at the time of Galba

when he says (xvii. 10): "And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come" (Augustus, Tiberius, Caius, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Vespasianus). He writes during the time of Galba, who reigned from July, 68 to January, 69, but he also knows Galba's successor Vespasianus, whom he expects to reign but a short time, viz., three years and a half; then Nero, his Antichrist, will return to usher in the glory and kingdom of Christ. He writes immediately before the great catastrophe in the history of Israel. The country of Palestine was subdued and devastated by the Romans; Jerusalem alone was left, and this also was daily threatened with the final blow from the rude conqueror's hand. The Jew-Christians had fled at the approaching danger over the Jordan, but the author of the Apocalypse, in his own way, participates in the wild enthusiasm and extravagant hopes of the heroic defenders of Jerusalem, who, to the very last, expected to see their holy city, or at least the temple, miraculously saved from the hands of the Gentiles. The author of the Apocalypse also has implicit trust in the miraculous preservation of the holy city and the temple.

The key to the book is given (xiii. 18) where it is said: "Let him that has understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred threescore and six." According to the custom of his days, the author of the Apocalypse uses the letters in their numerical value, and summing up the numerical value of the Greek letters contained in "Cæsar Nero" we get six hundred and sixty-six. This Nero, his Antichrist, is the hero of his poem. It is well known that the belief was generally entertained by the common people that Nero, who was murdered in a

revolt of his indignant people, had escaped to the Parthians and would soon return to take vengeance on his rebellious Romans. According to this fable, which the author of the Apocalypse accepts as undoubtedly true, he has his visions of Nero who (xvii. 8) "was and is not, and yet is" (xvii. 11): "And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth [king] and is of the seven." His theory is: Nero is not dead, but gone to the ten kings of the Parthians, who hate the whore; with these ten kings he will soon return, assume again the Roman empire, and take vengeance on Rome (xvii. 16): "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." After the destruction of Rome (chapter xviii.), Nero, *i.e.*, Antichrist, will make war against the holy city Jerusalem; but the heavens open, Christ appears with his heavenly hosts, Antichrist is thrown into the bottomless pit, and the millennium begins (chapter xix). The righteous, *i.e.*, those who suffered and died for the name of Jesus, will be resurrected and live forever. After a thousand years Antichrist will again break loose for a little while, and, with Gog and Magog (*i.e.*, the German tribes), make war against the saints. But fire will come down from heaven and destroy his hosts. Then a general resurrection will take place, the new heaven and the new earth will be founded, the new Jerusalem with all its splendor will come down from heaven, and God will reign and be its everlasting sun according to Isaiah (lx. 19-21).

The aim and object of the Revelation is to give comfort and assurance to the believers who, in the midst of the hardships that had come over them on account of the

persecutions under Nero, almost despaired (ii. 26; iii. 21; xiv. 12-13). For their faithful endurance he promises the reward which is soon to come, if they only persevere (xx. 4; xxii. 12).

We know that of all his prophecies not one was fulfilled: instead of Nero, Titus was the eighth king; instead of the expected miraculous salvation, it was the utter destruction of Jerusalem which history had to record; Jerusalem became not the capital of the world, but was leveled to the ground; nor was Rome leveled to the ground, but retained her government over the world. Christianity, indeed, persevered, and by its perseverance became the great ruling power of the world, without, however, introducing the celestial Jerusalem, the empire of peace, love, and good-will. Nevertheless, these prophecies are very instructive, in so far as they show us the hopes and expectations of the early Christians and the scope of their faith. The author is apparently a Jew-Christian, very familiar with the Jewish scriptures and Jewish traditions: his whole imagery is taken from the prophets, the Psalms, and the book of Daniel, only it is more extravagant and flighty, as that of every imitator. But still more instructive is the vigorous warfare which he wages against Paul and his adherents. The eradication of the Pauline errors is so much at his heart that he opens his revelation with an address to the seven principal churches to warn them against this heresy (ii. 2). He lauds the church of Ephesus because she cannot bear those who are evil; "and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars," which corresponds to I. Cor. ix. 2, where Paul says, "If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you," and to 1 Cor. xvi.

9, where he says of Ephesus, "there are many adversaries." Paul's permission to his converts (I. Cor. x. 25 ff.) to eat of the sacrifices of idols and whatever is sold in the shambles, he calls (Rev. ii. 14) the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel; and (ii. 20) Paul is likened to "that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols, etc. The followers of this Balaam, *i.e.*, Paul, who are called Nicolaitanes (for Nicolaus is but the Greek translation of the Hebrew Balaam; both mean destroyer or corrupter of the people), are hateful to his soul (2 Cor. vi. 15); they are of the synagogue of Satan, and not Jews; for to the author of the Apocalypse a true Jew is synonymous with a true Christian (ii. 9): "I know the blasphemy of those which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (iii. 9): "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie." Among the names of the twelve apostles engraved on the foundation of his new Jerusalem the name of Paul has no place (xxi. 14). The false prophet who worships the empire of Nero, and with him is "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (xvi. 13; xix. 20; xx. 10), has many traits of Paul, who is said "to work miracles by the spirit of devils, and going forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (xvi. 14). The author of the Apocalypse firmly believes that the Messiah will come especially for the twelve tribes of Israel (vii. 4 ff.), and then (vii. 9) for the promiscuous crowd of all the other nations. His Messiah is that

of the Jewish tradition (Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 54, *a*; Nedarim 39, *b*), whose name belongs to the seven things created before the world, and is stored away for the appointed time, therefore the author of the Apocalypse speaks (iii. 12) "of the new name that will be given to the Messiah" (xix. 12): "it is the name that no man knew but himself;" and, according to the rabbinical explanation of Psalm lxxii. 17, "his name shall be forever"; the author of the Apocalypse calls his Messiah the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. He is proud of being a Jew; his Judaism is only distinguished by the belief in Jesus as the Messiah, who has come, died, risen from the dead as the first of all men, and who will soon reappear, when the world that is to come will commence.

Thus the book of Revelation which, next to the epistles of Paul, is the oldest document of Christianity. It represents that Christianity which was taught by the immediate followers and personal disciples of Jesus, who were called Jew-Christians because they scrupulously observed all the laws and customs of the Jews, in contradistinction to the Paulines, who disregarded the Jewish laws. Their prerogative of being the true disciples of Jesus made the Jew-Christians during the first generations too strong and powerful for Paul and his doctrines. In the course of time, however, various circumstances so worked together that they had to submit. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was a severe shock to their hopes and doctrines; they had lost their spiritual center, and, from the very beginning but few in numbers, they could no longer successfully contend against the numerous Paulines, especially when Gnosticism also combined with the Paulines to oppose them.

What was Gnosticism? It was this: the faith in the Messiah who had come found more numerous adherents among the Jews outside of Palestine than in Palestine. The Jews in Palestine, oppressed by the Roman yoke and struggling to maintain their commonwealth, which was crumbling to pieces under the continued batterings of the relentless aggressor, could not believe that the Messiah, the universal deliverer, had come, though they expected him hourly. What *they* hoped of the Messiah had not come to pass; they had to help themselves as best they could, and not give way to the vain dream that all that was to be expected was done and accomplished. It was different with the many Jews scattered throughout Asia, Egypt, Greece; in fact, through the whole Roman empire. These always looked to Jerusalem and Palestine with great concern, but in the gigantic struggle of their Palestinian brethren against Rome they were mere lookers-on; they were outside of the storm, and in comparative sunshine; with them the belief "the Messiah has come" was not so inconsistent with reality as in Palestine. The glowing accounts which enthusiastic admirers brought to them, from their beloved Palestine, of the many miracles and wonders performed by the Messiah were by far more effective than the dull, commonplace facts which the Palestinians themselves had witnessed, and which, almost unobserved, had occurred in their troubled life. All this, combined with the obscure perception of Judaism prevalent among the foreign-born Jews, especially those of Egypt and Asia Minor, was a powerful motive for their more ready acceptance of the new faith. For a long time anterior to this period, the foreign Jews had lost the knowledge of the Hebrew language, and knew their

holy writings only from the Greek translation, the so-called Septuagint; they were, furthermore, strongly imbued with the prevailing Greek philosophy, which more or less influenced their Judaism. The main feature of this modified Greek Judaism was, that they transgressed the sublime behest, "Thou shalt make unto thee no image" (of God). It is true, their image was not material, for this their culture was too far advanced, but they had a spiritual image of God which they called "Logos." Their conception was, that God is too exalted above this material and physical world to have any connection with it. The Logos, an emanation of God, or, as Philo, the highest representative of this philosophy, poetically calls it, the "*Monogenes*" the only begotten of God, was he who created this world and preserves it. With Philo the Logos is but an abstract idea which finds its analogy in the anthropomorphic Scripture expression "word, or glory of God;" but very soon it was clothed with a personality and became a being of itself.

This Alexandrian mysticism had prepared the ground for the reception of the new idea "the Messiah has come," and very soon impregnated it with its own peculiarities. According to the traditions, the Messiah was to bring about or create a new world; then, of course, he must be the Logos by whom worlds are created. If this be so, the Messiah cannot be the Branch out of the house of David; he cannot be the Son of Man—he is the Son of God, and, though born of a human mother, he was begotten of God. Thus he came into this world; but how did he get out of it? According to the Jewish conception, the Messiah was but a man with higher gifts and endowments, a means in the hand

of God for the salvation of his people and the world ; as such he could die, rise again, and with his resurrection introduce the new world over which he was to rule. But how, according to this Gnostic idea, can a divine spirit be put to death by the hand of man ? Of course this is impossible ; but he can give himself as a sacrifice. This he did, and had to do ; for the old world, and all mankind, were corrupted, and had to perish. If this world was corrupted, the germ of corruption must have existed in the first Adam ; for, according to this doctrine of emanation, corruption can come only from a corrupt being. Adam did sin, and by his sin all mankind has fallen, is suffering, and was to have perished. But did it perish ? No, it did not. It did not perish for the reason only that the Logos, the creator of the first Adam and all mankind, gave himself up as a sacrifice. Thereby everything necessary was done ; by his suffering he took away the sin from all who believe in him ; there is nothing further to be expected ; the plan of salvation is completed.

This was Gnosticism, just as much opposed to the belief of the Jew-Christians and the Paulines as to that of the Jews. For the Jew-Christians and Paulines, much as they differed in regard to the continued validity of the law, both agreed in this : that they surely expected to see the resurrected Christ coming down with the clouds of heaven to usher in the new world, over which he was to rule supreme for evermore, while the Gnostics had no room in their philosophy for a second descent of the Logos.

New contentions and new struggles arose, of which the New Testament has preserved some records in the writings ascribed to the Apostle John, viz.: the fourth Gospel

and the three epistles of John. But the Apocalypse, breathing a spirit diametrically opposed to that of the fourth Gospel and the three epistles of John, is likewise ascribed to John, the apostle. How are we to decide between these contradictory claims? Simply thus: Since it appears very probable that the Apocalypse, written about 69 A.C., if not the work of John—who is very characteristically described (Mark iii. 17) as “the thunderer”—is surely the work of one of his immediate disciples, it is impossible that the fourth Gospel, written not before 160 A.C. or 170 A.C. (for it was entirely unknown before that time) can have the same author, even if the divergence of their views and doctrines were not as decided and irreconcilable as indeed it is. The motive that induced the writer of the fourth Gospel to assume the name of the Apostle John is very obvious. Of the three apostles, James, John, and Peter, those “pillars of the early Church,” James was known as the head of the church in Jerusalem, and Peter as the “apostle unto circumcision,” that is, of Jew-Christians. Of John the succeeding generations knew very little, and legend soon metamorphosed his character, and surrounded him with a halo of wonders and miracles. It was said that John reached a wonderful old age, the latter part of which he spent in Ephesus; there he was zealously working for the propagation of Christianity. Occupied in continual circuits, he organized congregations, installed priests, and consecrated bishops. Of the many wonderful things which he is said to have performed the best known are: how he converted a noble young heathen, and afterward saved him a second time from perdition, when he had joined a robber band; how he was thrown into boiling oil, at the

command of a Roman emperor, but emerged from this fiery baptism with renewed strength and vigor; how he was banished to the Isle of Patmos, where he received his revelation, but returned again to Ephesus to resume his old labors. At last he was so old that he could no longer walk, and he was carried to the church, where his sermons always consisted of the same few words, "Little children, love each other." He lived so long that it was said he could not die until Jesus should reappear (John xxi. 22). Isidorus Hispalensis tells us that when John felt his time to be come, he ordered a grave to be dug, took leave solemnly of his followers and disciples, and descended into it. Augustine knew that he was only sleeping there, waiting for the second advent of Christ, which was proved by the perpetual heaving of the sod over his grave, caused by the drawing of his breath. This transfigured John could easily be made a successful rival of James and Peter, and the writer of the fourth Gospel declares him very ostentatiously (xxi. 15-22) to be the favorite disciple of Jesus, being preferred to Peter. At the same time there was too little known of John to exclude the possibility of ascribing to him the peculiar Gnostic doctrines which the writer of the fourth Gospel wishes to set forth. The first sentence is the tenor of the whole book: "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God." Jesus is no longer a man, but God; he does not die, but voluntarily lays down his life to take it again (x. 15-18). The historical fact that Jesus came of the Jews, that "salvation is of the Jews" (iv. 22), cannot be denied, but it is merely accidental. To the writer of the fourth Gospel, Judaism is something entirely foreign; of the Jewish laws and festivals Jesus contin-

ually speaks as *your* laws, *your* passover (vii. 19-22; viii. 17; x. 34). The separation of Christianity from Judaism is complete, and the rancor at the persistent unbelief of the Jews is everywhere apparent. Jesus' activity here on earth, therefore, very fitly closes with a strong rebuke of this confirmed unbelief (xii. 37 ff.) of the Jews, who are unceremoniously called the children of the devil (viii. 44), who will not receive the truth; while the Samaritans and other Gentiles willingly flock to Jesus (iv. 30). The real purpose of the book is to set forth the new dogmas which Gnosticism had engrafted upon young Christianity. To accomplish this more effectually it seemed most advantageous to cast them into the shape of a fictitious narrative of the life of Jesus, into which all the stories of the current tradition which suited the purpose were taken up; others were made more suitable or omitted entirely. As the book commences with the new doctrine of the Logos, so does it conclude (xviii. 36) with the announcement of Jesus which is nowhere else to be found, "My kingdom is not of this world"; and, very significantly, Jesus expires (xix. 30) with "*Tetelestai!*"—it is finished—the old is accomplished, the new world has commenced.

As the Acts endeavor to lay the foundation for a Catholic Church, so does the fourth Gospel endeavor to establish the Christian dogmas. Both are valuable documents for a better knowledge of the first generations after Jesus, but neither is authentic in regard to the life of Jesus.

By this time the reader will have perceived that the perfect harmony and fraternal feeling generally supposed to have existed between the founders and early propagators of Christianity are chimeras which must be assigned

to the place where they properly belong—that of mythology. The truth which may be learned even from those records which are in everybody's hands—the New Testament writings—is, that there were lively contentions, bitter enmities, and intense hatreds between the three great parties, the Jew-Christians, the Paulines, and the Gnostics, of whom each claimed to be in possession of the only pure and undefiled truth of Christianity. But Christianity was yet in its infancy, had yet to battle for existence, and all parties soon felt the truth that “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” The prosecutions of early Christianity also proved very salutary; they were like the storms which compel the young tree to concentrate all its forces from within and try to strike a deeper root; they were powerful incentives to bring the various parties closer together. The extremes (the Ebionites on the side of the Jew-Christians, the Montanists on the side of the Paulines and Gnostics) were gradually left behind, while the intermediate stages tended to concentrate on a common platform, the planks of which were carefully selected from all parties, so that each could easily imagine that it stood on its own principles. That this could not have been achieved in one generation is natural; the wide distance which separated these parties had to be traversed step by step, and the traces of this gradual advance toward each other are well preserved in the New Testament literature. The epistle ascribed to James, the head of the church of Jerusalem, the highest exponent of Jew-Christianity, gives us a striking instance. The author, of course, is a very pronounced Jew-Christian, and passionately refutes the Pauline doctrine of faith and not works. (James ii. 14): “What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has

faith, and have no works? Can faith save him?" Paul's argument (Rom. iv; Gal. iii. 6 ff.), by which he labors to show that it was Abraham's belief alone that was accounted to him for righteousness, is skillfully refuted (James ii. 20-23 ff.): "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works when he offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" Nevertheless, almost involuntarily, he yields to Paul in so far as to acknowledge "a royal law," "a perfect law of liberty" distinguished from the common meaning of "the law."

More decidedly we find Jew-Christianity giving way to Paulinism in the epistles ascribed to Peter, also an apostle of Jew-Christianity, but not of such an unyielding character that he could not be made to look more favorably upon heathen Christianity than James. The scope of these epistles is best seen from I. Peter v. 12, where it is stated that this letter was sent by Silvanus, the well-known companion of Paul, who is called "a faithful brother"; furthermore, the object of this epistle is to testify that they (the heathen) are standing in the true grace of God. It was written at a time when circumcision, so obstinately defended against Paul, had been given up by Jew-Christianity, and was no longer considered obligatory for heathen converts; baptism was now generally acknowledged as sufficiently effectual to remove the "old Adam." This could be conceded to the Paulines, even from a strictly Jewish standpoint, as the Jews themselves, under certain circumstances, dispensed with circumcision, and acknowledged the immersion of a convert as sufficient to introduce him into

Judaism (Talmud, Yebamoth, 46 *a* ; Josephus, *Antiq.*, Book xx., chap. ii., sec. 4 ; Bereshith Rabbah, chap. 46). The author of I. Peter, therefore, expressly says (iii. 21), "even baptism does also now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Still more decidedly leaning toward Paulinism is the second epistle of Peter, where (iii. 15, 16) an explicit testimony of orthodoxy is given to "the beloved brother Paul," and it is intimated that those doctrines which are so odious to Jew-Christianity are not to be ascribed to Paul, but to the ignorant readers of his epistles. Paul, in his epistles, speaks of the very same things of which the author does, but there are in Paul's epistles "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

On the other hand, Paulinism likewise was ready to make concessions, and, if possible, meet half-way its Jew-Christian brethren. That the Acts very successfully pursue this course, we have already seen. The author did not intend to write the history of the past generations ; he intended to harmonize all the discords transmitted from the past generations. Not with the same effect, though with the same good-will, do the authors of the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, which are ascribed to Paul, labor for the same cause. Conciliation and unification of those who are separated is the main object of these epistles (Eph. iv. 14): "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Paul's Christology is accordingly modified. It is no longer faith, but "grace which saves through faith (Eph. ii. 5-8). Works are not absolutely rejected, but they

are predestined (Eph. ii. 10): "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Circumcision is abolished, but baptism is acknowledged as necessary to symbolize the new man (Col. ii. 11, 12; Eph. ii. 11 ff., etc.)

More outspoken than this leaning toward Jew-Christianity is that toward Gnosticism (Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 15, 16); and, naturally, Gnosticism also inclined more and more toward Paulinism, of which the Epistle to the Hebrews gives evidence. The author of this epistle moves entirely within the Alexandrian mysticism, the strength of which consists in allegorical explanations of the Hebrew Scriptures. By means of these he endeavors to prove Paul's doctrine of the abolition of the law (Heb. viii. 13): "In that he saith (Jeremiah xxxi. 31 ff.): a new covenant [will I make with the house of Israel], he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." But the reason of this abolition is not the Pauline, because the law is a curse; it is the Gnostic one, that, because the Logos has given himself as a sacrifice, therefore (Heb. vii. 12), "since the priesthood has been changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." The differences between Judaism and Christianity are not irreconcilable. Judaism, in its laws and institutions, was the symbol of Christianity that was to come. Especially was this the case with the priesthood; Christ is the everlasting high priest, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. iv. 14; v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 1 ff.) This high priest has given himself for the sins of those who believe in him, etc.

This work of conciliation and drawing nearer and

nearer together from all sides is perceptible throughout all the minor writings of the New Testament. And how is it with the first three, the so-called Synoptic, Gospels, which, setting aside the many variations and contradictions, in the main give the same account of the life of Jesus? Let us see. In the Gospel of Mark (xvi. 15, 16) the resurrected Christ announces to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." How surprising! What Paul, who never saw or heard Jesus, said and did, and what those apostles who always were in Jesus' company most strenuously opposed, is here the last behest of Jesus. Belief and baptism, not the works of the law and circumcision, are the essentials of a Christian life, for which all mankind, and not the Jews only, are called. And we hear from Galatians (ii. 9) how, twenty years afterward, Jesus' own brother, James, and Peter and John, most stubbornly oppose this doctrine of Paul, and, after a long dispute, reserve for themselves the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews, and insist on circumcision. Even the Acts (xv. 1) tell us that there were, in the original church of Jerusalem, those who maintained that, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved"; and (*ibid.* xv. 6 ff.) we hear that, as late as that, the apostles and elders had to come together to consider this matter which caused so much dispute.

According to Matthew ix. 9 and Mark ii. 14, Jesus sits in the midst of publicans and sinners, eating and drinking; the reproach of the Scribes and Pharisees he answers with, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." In Luke,

this occurrence is repeated several times (Luke xix.) Jesus chooses the house of Zaccheus, a publican, for his abode, and again answers the grumblers (xix. 9), "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." Again (Luke xv. 2), Jesus is in the midst of publicans and sinners, and again the Pharisees and Scribes murmur, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Jesus retorts by the parables of the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, and the lost son, declaring that "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." The same idea is set forth in endless variation, the sick and lame and maimed are called to the bridal dinner, because the friends and neighbors refused to come; the former are selected and the latter rejected, etc. Luke dwells upon it with special delight; but how does this accord with the fact that James, Jesus' own brother, considered it as something abominable to eat with the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 12); and Peter, who for a little while forgot himself, has to do penance for doing the very same thing for which Jesus had set the example? Even according to Acts x., Peter had to receive a special revelation before he would enter the house of a Gentile and eat with him, and, later (Acts xi.), had to defend himself against the accusations of his fellow-church-members in Jerusalem. How strange, if Jesus himself had really acted as described in the Gospels!

According to all three Gospels (Matt. xxiv. 2; Mark xiii. 2; Luke xix. 43, 44), Jesus prophesies most positively the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, and the rejection of the Jews as a nation for their unbelief.

And about forty years later, the author of the Revelation, who was believed to be John, the disciple most beloved of Jesus, but who surely must have been of high authority, or he could not have spoken to the seven churches of Asia in such an authoritative tone—this author of the Revelation (vii. 3 ff.) sees all the tribes of Israel sealed unto the living God as the true believers, and after them, tolerated only, the great multitude of nations “which no man numbers.” And (Rev. xi. 2) Jerusalem is and remains the holy city, which the Gentiles may tread under foot for forty and two months, but which shall never fall.

How is this possible? How are such palpable and glaring contradictions to be explained? Science furnishes the explanation: Jesus can never have spoken nor acted as the Gospels represent him to have spoken and acted. Even if Luke (i. 2) would not have told us that none of those who were eye-witnesses left anything written of the life of Jesus; even if all the Gospels would not tell us that they are not the Gospels of, but the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark and Luke and John, we would have to infer it from other evidence. The early Christians were not so much concerned about the Christ who had lived and died, as about the Christ who was soon to reappear. Paul, and, long after him, the Church, taught the people to look out and watch for the second coming of Christ, for the world which was soon to come. Now, people who daily expect to see the destruction of this world, will surely not take the trouble of writing history, or leaving faithful records of what has happened in this miserable world to generations which are to have no existence. But supposing the immediate followers and companions of Jesus had been inclined to write his

history, they would not have been able to do it, for they all belonged to the lowest, the illiterate class of society; they were those of whom the Gospels so often speak: "blessed are the poor in mind, those babes to whom it was revealed what is hidden from the wise."

This is further corroborated by other data: Until 120 A.C. we do not hear of any Gospel. The first is Papias, a disciple of John, who speaks of a collection containing the sayings of Christ which the Apostle Matthew compiled in the Hebrew language; but our Greek Gospel according to Matthew cannot be a translation of these sayings. The same Papias knows of evangelical memorabilia which Mark is said to have taken down from the discourses of Peter, but the description he gives of them plainly shows that they cannot be the Gospel according to Mark.

There remains not the slightest shadow of doubt that none of the Gospels were composed before the first quarter of the second century after Jesus. According to all the evidence now in the hands of critical science, the Gospel according to Mark *must have been the first of those in the New Testament*, for Luke (i. 1) knew of many gospels that were current before he undertook to write his. That there should have been various relations of the same events is very natural, as the lapse of time gave occasion for modeling these events according to the doctrines and opinions of those who related them. This is confirmed by a closer examination of the Gospels, which shows clearly that all their deviations and contradictions are but the consequence of the various doctrines and views held by the various parties we know already so well; it is easy to see that the author of the Gospel according to Matthew was a Jew-Christian, the

author of the Gospel according to Mark a somewhat timid, and the author of the Gospel according to Luke a very decided Pauline.

We said that all indications point to the Gospel of Mark as the first of those in the New Testament, and that its author was a somewhat timid Pauline. Now, the first impulse to write a life of Jesus must have been given by the Paulines. The Jew-Christians had the authority of Jesus for their doctrine; the tradition "thus, and thus did Jesus speak and act" was in their possession. This, however, did not hinder the Paulines from differing with them. But if their different opinion was to be the only true one, it must be that of Jesus. How was this to be accomplished? Very easily. They had only to do what other generations and later centuries, to this very day, were and are doing. Every sect, party, or shading of Christianity ascribes the doctrines peculiarly its own directly to Jesus, whose life and teaching it shapes to correspond to its preconceived ideal. Just the same thing did the Paulines in their day; and they could not do it more effectively than by writing a life of Jesus. These endeavors of the Paulines to represent the life of Jesus in *their* light naturally incited the Jew-Christians to do likewise, and thus we have the two Gospels, that according to Mark and that according to Matthew, which must have closely followed each other. A comparison of these two Gospels shows conclusively their different tendencies.

Matthew claims a decided pre-eminence for Peter, for instance (xvi. 18): "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," which is entirely omitted in Mark (viii. 29). Matthew (xv. 1-

20) and Mark (vii. 1-23) relate one and the same story. The disciples of Jesus were lax in some insignificant observances; they ate with unwashed hands, for which they were rebuked by the Pharisees. Jesus justly replies: "not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." The same story is told by Mark, but quite a different meaning is put upon it. In Matthew the meat seems defiled to the Pharisees, because eaten with unwashed hands, as he expressly explains it (xv. 20): "These are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man." In Mark this is carefully avoided, and in its place dexterously laid into the mouth of Jesus (Mark vii. 15), "there is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him," which agrees perfectly with Paul's permission to his converts "to eat whatever is set before them, and buy unhesitatingly whatever is sold in the shambles" (1 Cor. x. 25 ff). Jesus, in speaking of the destruction of the temple, and the hardships that will follow, says, according to Matthew (xxiv. 20): "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day"; but Mark (xiii. 18) has only "pray ye that your flight be not in the winter," ignoring the Sabbath-day according to Paul's doctrine. Again, in the same speech ascribed to Jesus by both Matthew and Mark, we do not find in Matthew what is so very important to the Pauline Mark (xiii. 10), "And the Gospel must first be published among all nations."

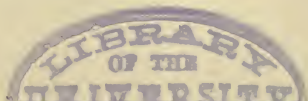
These discrepancies could be shown in a hundred instances; but those we have cited will suffice to show that Matthew represents a decided, though already somewhat modified, Jew-Christianity, while Mark is

modestly speaking for Paulinism. In the course of time even this modified Jew-Christianity, as represented in Matthew, ceased to prevail; Paulinism gained more and more ground; and, to make it a victory sure and irrevocable, a compromise, as favorable as possible to its doctrines, was deemed necessary. The same prudent mind which accomplished this task in the Acts, is to be perceived in the Gospel according to Luke; for the author of the Acts is also the author of the third Gospel, as he himself declares in the introduction to the Acts. With the same skillful hand with which in the Acts he adroitly wipes away all unpleasantness and bitterness between Paul and the original apostles, by transforming the history of the first generations after Christ, he undertakes so to shape the life and acts of Jesus that they very strikingly represent the Pauline doctrines without giving offence to the Jew-Christians. Retaining all the main features of the narratives of Matthew and Mark, he deftly takes away every stumbling-block, and complacently smooths over every rough and uneven passage. Whatever is unfavorable to Paulinism is omitted or toned down; whatever is favorable is emphasized, repeated with untiring variations, and greatly enlarged upon.

For instance: Jesus' command (Matt. x. 5), "go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not," is omitted; the harsh treatment of the Samaritan woman (Matt. xv. 24 ff.), softened down in Mark (vii. 25 ff.), is entirely left out in Luke. What Jesus says of the law (Matt. v. 18), "for verily I say unto you till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled," is rendered by Luke (xvi. 16, 17), "The

law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached and *every man* passes into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." (Matt. xxiii. 1-3): "Then spake Jesus to the multitude and to his disciples, saying, The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe that observe and do, but do not after their works, for they say and do not," is rendered in Luke (xx. 45 ff.), "Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples, Beware of the Scribes which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets and the highest seats in the synagogues and the chief rooms at feasts," etc. The parable of the rich and the poor man (Luke xvi. 19), originally the property of the Ebionites, and intended to teach the blessedness of poverty by the example of Lazarus, has lost its meaning and is turned against the Jews, who are condemned by their own patriarch, Abraham.

In the two other Gospels we read that Jesus took the usual route from Galilee to Jerusalem, on the other side of Jordan, through Perea, to avoid Samaria; but Luke not only makes him go through this heathen country, so hated by the Jews; he especially selects it as the arena of Jesus' activity, which rivals that in Galilee (Luke ix. 51; xviii. 35). The speeches and parables of Jesus, while in the country of the Samaritans, are marvelously adapted to justify Paul's doctrine. There, too, that no prerogative be left to the twelve Jew apostles (Luke x.), seventy others are appointed who are sent to the Gentiles (seventy, for there were then believed to be so many nations); they are obviously preferred, and (x. 17) return with the most favorable reports of their message. When,



in the Revelation (xxi. 14), no room is left for the name of Paul, among the other apostles, to be engraved on the foundation of the new Jerusalem, the names of these seventy are written in heaven (Luke x. 20). Every sentence of Matthew directed against Paul, for instance (Matt. xiii. 25), where the enemy comes and sows tares among the wheat, is omitted; other sententious passages are dexterously changed; for instance, in Matthew (vii. 21 ff.), Jesus is made to say, "Not every one that says unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those who perform (by work; the Greek *poion* leaves no ambiguity) the will of my father which is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Here the workers of iniquity are evidently the Paulines, who oppose the performance of the divine will by work, and lay all the stress upon prophesying and doing wonderful works. In Luke (xiii. 25 ff.) it is somewhat different: "And ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I know you not whence you are, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." Here all the workers of iniquity are those who were continually urging against Paul that they knew the Lord according to the flesh, that is the Jew-Christians.

It would lead us too far to show all those little, but so very characteristic and significant, traits that distinguish

each of the three Gospels, and by which the authors so skillfully understand how to serve their party principles, while apparently they are telling us one and the same story. With the knowledge of their tendencies, it will now be easy to ascertain how much of historical truth there is left to construe therefrom the historical Jesus of Nazareth.

III.

JESUS OF NAZARETH.

A SCIENTIFIC examination of the Gospels has shown that they were written long after Jesus, when there were no longer any eye-witnesses, and that the motive for their composition was not to give a faithful record of the life of Jesus, but to justify the doctrines and positions of the parties to which their respective authors belonged. With this double bias the sayings and traditions which (Luke i. 2) "they had delivered unto them who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" were collected. Early Christianity was too much wrapped in the anxious anticipation of the destruction of this world and the second coming of Christ to have any thought left for the Christ that had already been in this world. When, therefore, at the beginning of the second century A.C., the various parties, in order to defend their own position, found it necessary to go back to the life of Jesus, very little was actually known of it.

How could it be otherwise? The first thirty years of his life were passed in secluded obscurity. Jesus grew up in the simple, quiet home of Joseph the carpenter and Mary his mother; and, as the oldest son of a numerous family (Matt. xii. 46; xiii. 55, 56; Mark iii. 31; Luke viii. xix.), he soon took up the trade of his

father. When he began his short but eventful career, his towns-people were not a little astonished, and exclaimed (Mark vi. 3): "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and Juda and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us, and they are offended at him." This public career at which his own house and family took offence, lasted only one, according to others three, years. How much of it could there be known after a hundred years, when Josephus, the historian of those days, who never omits anything wonderful or remarkable which may possibly redound to the glory of his people, and who speaks of many other greatly inferior prophets living about the same time (Jos. *Antiq.*, Book xviii., chap. v., sec. 2; Book xx., chap. v., sec. 1) has not a word to say concerning him; for it is well known that the passage in Josephus (Book xviii., chap. iii., sec. 3), where allusion is made to him, is a very palpable and disingenuous interpolation.

Nevertheless there was one infallible guide for the composition of the Gospels. Jesus was the Messiah. If so, then all that the prophets had said of the Messiah, and all which at that time was interpreted into the Scriptures about the Messiah, had to be fulfilled in Jesus. Prototypes of such a life were given in the lives of Moses and Elijah, which could easily be copied and enlarged upon. To give one instance: There was nothing known of the birth and early life of Jesus. Mark, the oldest and most trustworthy of the Gospels, omits them entirely, and hastens to the one or three years of Jesus' public activity; but Matthew and Luke give us very detailed particulars of them. Where did they get them? Well, according to Micah (v. 2), "But thou Bèthlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands

of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel," the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. It is true the prophet only speaks of a king after the manner of David, who will rise out of David's house; but the common explanation of this verse among the Jews of that time was that it meant the Messiah; the Messiah, therefore, was to be born in Bethlehem. But Jesus was too well known as a Galilean and not a Judean; he was of Nazareth. How can this be explained?

There are two modes of explanation possible. The one is, that Joseph and Mary originally lived in Bethlehem. And what induced them to move to Nazareth? Nothing but the danger which threatened the life of the new-born Messiah from the wicked King Herod, just as the life of the new-born Moses, the first savior of Israel, was endangered by the cruel commands of the wicked King Pharaoh. And how did Herod know that the savior of Israel was born? Why, the same men who, according to the Midrash, (Jalkut, sec. 165)—the common popular explanation of the Scriptures—advised Pharaoh of the birth of Moses, also announced the birth of Jesus to Herod, viz.: the magicians. And how did the magicians know? In the case of Moses they read it in the stars; they could surely do the same in this case as well, which would also coincide remarkably with an announcement of the Scriptures (Numbers xxiv. 17), where it is said "a star shall rise out of Jacob." But in Jerusalem the magicians were not so abundant as in Egypt; they had therefore to come from the far East, which again, very fortunately, gave occasion for the fulfillment of other Scripture verses (Isaiah lx. 6; Psalm lxxii. 10), where it is said that foreign princes and nations

will bring gifts and presents to the savior king of Israel, etc. As Moses had to flee from the wrath of the wicked king, so has this second Savior; but, instead of from Egypt, he flees to Egypt, which at that time was the general refuge of those persecuted in Palestine. When Joseph and Mary afterward learn of the death of the wicked king they return to Palestine, but are too much frightened to go to their old home (Matt. ii. 22); they seek an out-of-the-way place in Galilee, viz.: Nazareth, and to this place they are led providentially, that another Scripture verse (Judges xiii. 5) may be fulfilled, which, though it is said of Samson and has quite another meaning, shall account for Jesus being a Nazarene. And now everything is nicely arranged. Thus Matthew, the Jew-Christian, who is conversant with Jewish traditions.

Quite different it is with Luke, the Pauline, who does not wish to see in Jesus merely a second Moses. According to him Joseph and Mary always lived in Nazareth (Luke i. 26); how then could Jesus be born in Bethlehem? Well, they were accidentally there. And what caused them to go such a distance? The author of the Gospel according to Luke has heard something of the census at the time of Augustus, to which the Jews so reluctantly submitted. That this census took place six or ten years after the birth of Jesus he probably did not know; but even if he did know, such an insignificant anachronism could not detain him from using the census as the best means of removing the whole difficulty. To bring Joseph and Mary at the nick of time to Bethlehem, he supposes, likewise against historical truth, that, for the purpose of this census, every Jew had to go to the city of his fathers. The imagination of the author, once started in this direction, very soon supplies

all the rest. All the inns are occupied, Joseph and Mary have to lodge in a stable, and from the Acts we have seen the writer's fondness for introducing in his narratives hosts of angels that hold sweet intercourse with the favored children of men, and we are not in the least surprised to find here the same machinery employed to the same purpose and effect.

These two narrations of Matthew and Luke of course contradict and preclude each other on all points, but those who have a critical insight into the various tendencies of the Gospels will no longer call it contradiction; they will see how the same legends, when told by the Jew-Christian Matthew, necessarily take forms quite different from those which the Pauline Luke imparts to them. The one derives Jesus' pedigree from David, the Jewish king; the other from Adam, the father of all men. These various premises determine the course of events in the life of their hero. The gradual formation and conglomeration of these legends can yet be traced by these often so palpable, still oftener almost imperceptible, deviations of the Gospels from each other. We see that each is trying to construe the life of Jesus according to the doctrines and opinions of his party, to which the current legends and sayings have to adapt themselves. From their various standpoints they see fulfilled in him whatever of the Scriptures they deem necessary of fulfillment to justify *their* faith in the Messiah.

But at last the main question will naturally arise: How much *do* we know of the life of Jesus? We must confess it is very, very little, much less than even those scientists, who by their untiring labor and researches have contributed most to these discoveries, are willing to admit. It is about this:

Jesus was born and reared in Nazareth, a small city of Galilee. Galilee, according to all the information we have, was a pleasant, fruitful, but over-populated province of Palestine, inhabited by Jews. Not so secluded by natural boundaries as Judea, the surrounding heathen countries exerted upon the customs and opinions of the Galileans a greater influence than on those of the inhabitants of Judea. The system of education then prevailing among the Jews made it almost impossible for any man to be without some knowledge of "the law" (Babylonian Talmud, Megila 24 *a* ; 25 *a*) ; and the weekly discourses in the synagogues on the Sabbath made even the common people acquainted with the wisdom of the great teachers in Jerusalem. The higher education, however, could only be acquired in Jerusalem, from which Galilee was cut off by the interlying Samaria. The Galileans, therefore, were generally considered ignorant ; their language was mixed with foreign phrases, their pronunciation corrupt, and so strongly marked that the Galilean was thereby at once recognized. (Matt. xxvi. 73 ; Mark xiv. 79 ; Babylonian Talmud, Erubin, 53 *a*, *b*). Their ignorance, as is generally the case, made them bigoted ; they were very scrupulous and strict in conforming to the minutest religious observances. Superstition is not inconsistent with bigotry ; and the common superstition of those days, the belief in evil spirits that possess man, grew very luxuriantly among the Galileans. They were a good-natured but very excitable people, easily turned into fanatics, which made Galilee the hot-bed of politico-religious insurrections. All the demagogues and agitators of the people came from this province ; we know of Ezekias, Judas his son, and Teudas ; there the Kanaim or Zealots had

their origin, and there they found most of their adherents.

This was the general character of the Galileans, but Jesus lived at a time when the waves of political and religious excitement rose very high. The Edomite family of the Herodians had only offended the national pride; but the all-powerful Romans were trying to subvert their whole commonwealth, their political and religious institutions. The hope to resist successfully the enemy grew weaker and weaker, and the longing for a deliverer more intense. It was generally believed that this deliverer would soon appear if the people were worthy of him; and there were not men wanting to exhort the people to greater piety and purity, that the promised deliverer might thereby be conjured down.

One of these men was John the Baptist, who lived by the side of the Jordan. He called upon the people to repent, and, to impress them more deeply, he used immersion in the waters of the Jordan as a symbol of purification quite usual among the Jews. Many people flocked to this John, and "were greatly moved by hearing his words" (Josephus, *Antiq.*, Book xviii., chap. v., sec. 2). Among these was Jesus of Nazareth. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," was the prophetic announcement of John, which must have made a deep impression upon Jesus' sensitive mind, saturated as it was with the wild hopes of his Galilean surroundings. That the deliverer of the people must soon come was the firm conviction of many, but where he was or who he was nobody could or dared to tell.

John, like the old prophets, had no respect for persons. Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, had married Herodias, his brother's wife, who had unceremoniously

divorced herself from her former husband. Such a flagrant violation of the law could not remain unnoticed by John. He openly rebuked Herod, and the tyrant, fearing John's influence upon the people, had him imprisoned in the fortress Machaerus, where he was soon beheaded, upon the instigation of Herodias.

The imprisonment and subsequent death of John were the signal for Jesus to step into the vacant place, to become, like him, a prophet, and to stir up the people to repentance, for "the kingdom of God is at hand." In his own city (Nazareth) he found more opposers than followers. He turned to Capernaum, a small city on the northwestern shore of the sea of Genesareth. There, among the simple fishermen and the lower classes of the people, he found many followers and adherents. The house of Peter, one of his disciples, became his home and the center of a large circle of ardent admirers. A new prophet had arisen in Israel, and as such he had to perform wonders and cures, and especially to drive out the evil spirits which haunted the imagination of this simple populace. Those who believed were easily cured; those who were not cured, at least, for the moment, professed to have their troubles alleviated or cured, lest they should be counted sinners past redemption. "I believe, O Lord! help thou my unbelief," was probably the leading thought of many who approached him for help. This success, and the extravagant praise of his companions and followers, soon awakened in Jesus the thought, "How if thou thyself wert the promised deliverer, the Messiah?" Timidly and hesitatingly he yielded to this bold and proud thought, to which he himself did not dare to give utterance. To hear from others what in our inmost heart we wish to hear, but dare not express with

our lips, gives us more assurance; and thus Jesus continually solicits others to tell him what, as the most secret but also the most cherished thought, is buried in his own bosom; yet, as soon as it is uttered, his soul is startled, he shrinks back, and requests its concealment from all other men.

In Galilee he had already many followers who implicitly believed in the new prophet; but this was of no consequence so long as Judea, and especially Jerusalem, would not acknowledge his claims. There, he felt, the most difficult part of his prophetic career was yet to be performed. The higher and better educated classes of Jerusalem not only looked with disdain upon an ignorant Galilean, but also dreaded every commotion of the people, and therefore explicitly denied the popular hopes of a Messiah (See note, p. 21). Still, if his budding fame was not soon to fade, it was necessary to establish it in the capital; and, after much wavering, he resolved, at the approach of the Passover festival, to go to Jerusalem among the other pilgrims. The Passover festival was the most opportune time for such an agitation; during this festival there were not only many Galileans—his friends and adherents—in Jerusalem, but also a great many of the country people, whose kindred spirits could more easily be moved and convinced than the cold and reflecting minds of the citizens. Surrounded by his friends and adherents, he entered Jerusalem, and, going up to the temple-mountain, he at once created a disturbance by overturning the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those that sold doves in the temple courts (Mark xi. 15). Such an act was no unusual piece of presumption for a prophet. But prophets and agitators, in those later days of the

Roman oppression, had become rather dangerous to the commonwealth, as they always gave the Romans a pretext for interference, new cruelties, and new slaughters. On the Passover festival the Romans usually took special precautions. The Roman procurator, who resided in Cæsarea, came to Jerusalem; the garrison was increased and kept under arms, so that, at a moment's notice, the rude soldiery could fall upon the people, if any tumult should arise. (Jos., *Antiq.*, Book xx., chap. v., sec. 3). This festival, therefore, was greatly dreaded by the Jewish authorities of those days, on account of the frequent collisions between the congregated Jews and the Roman army.

Jesus, it is true, endeavored to avoid the political danger by declaring a new world and a new state of things as coming which was to have nothing in common with this world. But if this world was to perish, the then-existing temporal powers were likewise threatened. The ruling party, *i.e.*, the Sadducees, opposed to all innovations, and principally to the belief in a coming world, were the more eager to suppress this new movement, as the head of their party, the high priest, was generally held responsible for every public disturbance. The natural consequence was that those in power, to avoid such great calamities as might ensue from the declaration "a new world is coming," had Jesus imprisoned before the beginning of the festival. That this imprisonment took place on Passover-eve is very improbable, as it is against the Jewish law to hold court during a festival, or to commence a trial in the night time. The fact is, that before the beginning of the Passover festival Jesus was brought before the high priest, who hastily convened an informal court, which declared

that Jesus' claim to be the expected Messiah was nothing but blasphemy, for which he should suffer the penalty of death. This, however, could only be inflicted by the Roman procurator. Pilate was then in office, and, according to all we know of him, he was the last person to hesitate for a moment in putting to death a man who declared himself the Messiah, *i.e.*, the anointed king of the Jews. Thus Jesus found an untimely death on the cross; it was the death of the enthusiast, who dies heroically for an idea. What this idea was is to be seen from the doctrines laid down by Jesus.

WHAT ARE THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS?

Jesus of Nazareth who assumed the *role* of the Messiah, then so anxiously expected by the masses of the Palestinian Jews as the deliverer from all their oppression and the founder of a new world—that is to say, of a new order of things, in which those now oppressed would be the rulers, and the present rulers be the oppressed; in which the first would be the last and the last first—is generally believed to be the founder of Christianity as it now is. To be true followers of Jesus, to adhere to his doctrine and believe in him, as he believed in himself, is the common ground on which all the multifarious denominations of Christendom stand. Even those who, on account of the light which modern science is continually spreading, feel compelled to separate from all these denominations, cannot tear themselves away from a veneration and belief inculcated in the minds of so many preceding generations. For their breaking away from the denominational bounds, they generally give the same reason for which all the others deem it necessary to remain within them, *viz.* : *to be true followers of Jesus*. Now, if we do

not wish to wrong Jesus and violate historical truth, we must abstract from this idolizing and sublimating process, and simply state, the facts which the three Synoptic Gospels, under their legendary and mythical garb, have preserved.

This compels us, in the first place, to exonerate Jesus from the grave imputation of having declared himself God, or equal to God. No (Mark xii. 29): "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God, the Eternal is One," is held up by him as the first of all the commandments; what he claimed was the Messiahship, for which he thought himself specially chosen and predestined. Even in making this claim, we can distinctly see how his heart is palpitating and his conscience disturbed, for it was inconsistent with the traditions of the people, according to which the Messiah was to come out of the house of David. These noble emotions, however, were soon calmed down by his unexpected success, the implicit faith and boundless praise of his followers, until he could reason them away in the manner then so much in vogue by taking a Scripture verse and letting it say just what you wanted it to say. We read (Matt. xxii. 42 ff.; Mark xii. 35 ff.; Luke xx. 41 ff.): "And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the Scribes that Christ is the son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David, therefore, himself called him Lord, and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly." The psalm is evidently addressed to a king or prince to whom the poet announces victory, and sings: "The Eternal said to my Lord [the king] Sit on my right hand, etc."; but in the

manner and taste of those days, the application of the psalm to the Messiah is quite conclusive to show that it is not absolutely necessary for the Messiah to be a descendant of David, and the application is ingenious enough to please the common people and satisfy Jesus that, though not a descendant of David, he may nevertheless be the promised Messiah.

The Messiah, according to the Jewish conception, was to be a man specially chosen by God for the redemption of his people and the rest of the world; Jesus, therefore, did not claim any higher than human nature; he did not claim sinlessness, or he would not have gone to John to be baptized and cleansed from sin; he would not have prayed so fervently "forgive us our trespasses;" nay, he could not have prayed at all, if he considered himself God or equal to God, for what possible benefit can prayer have when directed to oneself? Jesus, who declined even the attribute of goodness, could not fall into such an error (Matt. xix. 17; Mark x. 18 ff.; Luke xviii. 19): "Jesus said, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God."

As a Jew he could not do otherwise, and Jesus was nothing but a Jew. Even if the authors of the Revelation and the Acts would not tell us that the most faithful imitators of and believers in Jesus were zealous Jews, and wished to be nothing but Jews, we would learn it from the Gospels, which characterize him as a perfect type of the Jews of those days. He is averse to the rigorous application of the rabbinical laws—for instance, the Sabbath laws, purification laws, etc.—and is in favor of straining the moral laws to their utmost extent, for instance, the ten commandments (Matt. v. 21, 27, 31), etc. But this was nothing unusual since the

time of the prophets, and in his days was especially advocated by the reform movement of Hillel. Such difference of opinion was never considered heresy among the Jews; the same thing happened daily in the schools of Hillel and Shammai. The difference of opinion very seldom affected the practice, and thus we hear Jesus continually exhort his adherents to bring the sacrifices prescribed by the law of Moses, just as we hear from the Acts that they always did as long as the temple existed. He reiterates his intention to fulfill and not to destroy the law; of the laws not a jot nor tittle shall fail; his disciples are commanded to observe and do whatever the Scribes and Pharisees, who are sitting in the seat of Moses, bid them observe. He was a Jew in every respect, and never dreamed of establishing a new religion. If anybody had foretold Jesus that his exertions would lead to a new religion, by which his own Judaism would in time be persecuted with the most bitter hatred, he would have denounced such a man as a false prophet and a malignant slanderer. He, who most positively declared (Matt. xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27): "Verily, I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here who shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power," could not think of establishing a new religion for the short time this world was yet to last. On the contrary, he was so strongly imbued with the Judaism which then prevailed among the lower and more ignorant classes, that his whole being was taken up with it, and his course of life ordained by it; he was so much a child of his own time, a son of his own people, that he indeed might serve as their strongest representative. It was a time in which the national and religious feelings of the

Jews in Palestine were goaded to the verge of despair. The conviction that this world was too corrupt to last any longer was held by many; this world deserves to perish and therefore must shortly perish. The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand; all that is left is to repent and prepare for the world which is soon to come. The genius of the people, eminently a religious one, was sick and sore at heart and soul, and a sickly religious exuberance was the natural result.

John the Baptist was indeed the forerunner of Jesus. His self-imposed task of calling the people to repentance and preparing them for the coming world was taken up by Jesus where John had left it. But the hopes of the people became daily more and more impatient; Jesus, carried forward on the waves of the popular current, had to complete the work of John the Baptist by advocating maxims adapted to the belief in a world which was soon to come. And here it is that we can speak of a doctrine peculiar to Jesus only. In every other respect—it cannot be repeated too often—Jesus was a true son of his people, a child of his time; the morals, laws, and doctrines he taught were those of his time and people; even his method of teaching in parables and symbols was taken from the popular teachers of those days, who employed this method whenever they did not believe there was a higher theological training among their auditors; he used proverbs, sayings, and stories for his illustrations, just as the popular teachers of the Midrash did; but whenever he gave advice or directions for the life here on earth, he followed his own theory, which, indeed, deviated decidedly from a sound and healthy conception of Judaism.

This theory we know already; it is: “this world is

soon to perish," and his doctrines in regard to the life here on earth are but the natural consequences of this theory. If this world is soon to perish then it is not worth while to take any care for to-morrow, or to accumulate earthly treasures; on the contrary, it is wise to give away all you have to the poor, and share their blessedness of poverty. * It is not worth while to resist evil in this world, but "whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; if anybody takes away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also;" to maintain justice and equity in this world is impossible; and as another is soon to come, why labor in vain to establish it? Suffer meekly and submissively, for great is your reward in heaven. †

* It would be surprising if this sentiment, which was but a natural outgrowth of the insecurity of all property and the prevailing lawless violence which made worldly goods often a very dangerous incumbrance, should be found only with Jesus and his adherents. And, indeed, the Talmud gives us sufficient indications that it existed in wider circles. In Jerusalem Talmud, Peah 15 *b* we read that Rabbi Jeshobeb gave away all his property to the poor. He lived at the time of Jesus, for Rabbi Gamaliel disapproved of his action; and (Babylonian Talmud, Kethuboth 50 *a*; Arachin 28 *a*) we hear that a convention of rabbis, held in Usha, a small town of upper Galilee, at the beginning of the second century A.C., had to decree that he who wished to give his property to the poor, must not be allowed to give more than one-fifth of all he had; no such decree would have been necessary, if the mania to divest oneself of all property had not been prevailing.

† Jesus' doctrine of non-resistance, so foreign to Judaism, which teaches: "justice must prevail, though it have to pierce the mountains," is likewise but a sad testimony of the hardships of his days, when resistance to injustice was useless and even dangerous; sympathetic chords we hear sometimes sounded in the Talmud; for instance (Yoma 22 *b*, and parallels): "rather be of those who are humbled than of those who humble others; be of those who are offended and answer not; of those who perform joy-

There is no time for fastening and cherishing the ties of the family, of society, and the commonwealth which are all to perish; the sanctity of the family relations between father and son, mother and daughter, brothers and sisters and friends, held in such high esteem among the Jews, must fall away and be disregarded under such pressing circumstances. There is not a word in favor of all these family bonds, but many intimations that they are a hindrance to the fulfillment of his mission. Jesus himself is separated from his family, does not even grant a hearing to his mother and brothers, when they come to see him (Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 31 ff.; Luke viii. 19), because his disciples and followers are his all in all, his mother and brothers, for they likewise have left fathers and mothers, wives and children, to follow him (Matt. xix. 27; Mark x. 28; Luke xviii. 28). He distinctly announces that he has not come to bring peace but war into the family circle: "the son shall be at variance against his father; and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household (Matt. x. 34 ff.) The thoughts of man shall be entirely diverted from this world, and directed toward the world to come. This is the only object worth living for. Can we yet be astonished to find such a confusion of ideas, wherever he condescends to give directions in regard to the affairs of this miserable world?

For instance: Hillel had given the so-called golden rule (Babylonian Talmud, Sabbath, 31 a), "whatsoever thou wouldst that men should do to thee, do thou even so to them," to a heathen, who wished to know the sum

fully the will of their Heavenly Father, and rejoice over the afflictions that come over them."

total of Judaism in as short a time as he could stand on one foot. But this law of mere reciprocity, easily comprehended even by a heathen, remains far behind the obligations of a Jew, which Jesus likewise states (Mark xii. 29 ff.): "The first of all commandments is, "Hear, O Israel! the Eternal our God, the Eternal is One. And thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole might. And the second is like it, namely: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This love of God and man, as the disputing Scribe affirms, is the real characteristic of Judaism, and not the so-called golden rule. For this very important distinction Jesus has no understanding; he places this rule of reciprocity not only on the same level with the love of God and man, but makes it the keystone of all morality; while, inconsistently enough, he commands in another place, what is impossible, to love our enemies, with which is coupled the erroneous statement that of old it was commanded to hate our enemies, which commandment is nowhere to be found.

Such impracticable doctrines, much more foreign to Judaism than his claim to the Messiahship, carried him to the extremest limits of Judaism, from whence but a few steps were necessary to be outside of its pale. Besides, just what was sublimest in Jesus was apt to give offence to the true Jewish spirit: we mean his childlike trust and confidence in God. Jesus undoubtedly was a religious genius, his whole being was drawing away from the real toward the ideal; and thus the childlike confidence in the goodness and mercy of God, as taught by Judaism, could easily be turned in his mind into the childish idea that, whatever man may pray for from his

Heavenly Father, if he does it with true faith and implicit trust and does it persistently it will be granted, just as an indulgent father will grant everything to his beloved, crying child, though it be irrational. (Matt. xxvii. 20 ff.; Mark xi. 22 ff.; Luke xvii. 6 ff.): "And Jesus saith, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he says shall come to pass, he shall have whatever he saith," etc. Psychologically we may trace the source of this belief to the miraculous cures which he, as well as his adherents, believed to have been accomplished at his bidding. At the beginning of his career these miracles were, undoubtedly, an inexplicable mystery to himself; but the growing faith in his Messiahship suggested the explanation that it was the result of his prayers and faith in God.

Such a faith naturally stimulated him to persevere in his adopted *role* to the bitter end. With God everything is possible; his kingdom may come any time, and then the Messiah will be revealed to all mankind. It was the staff and support on which he leaned securely, while he had to suffer for his idea, which he never gave up until, perhaps, in the last moment, in the agony of death, when he exclaimed, in the Psalmist's words: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

After this tragic death his frightened disciples and followers scattered and fled to Galilee, as the Gospels indicate. It is too late, in our age, to offer any arguments against the presumed resurrection. The death of Jesus is testified beyond dispute; of his resurrection, setting aside the many contradictions in the three relations, we have only the testimony of Mary Magdalen, a

nervous, amorous, and excitable woman, out of whom Jesus had driven seven devils ; that is to say, a woman afflicted with periods of insanity. It is scarcely necessary to say that this resurrection took place only in the imagination of Jesus' followers, and the process by which this was accomplished was a very natural one.

We all know our state of mind when one who is near and dear to us has departed to the mysterious realms of eternity ; we know that for some time we cannot comprehend it. Even if we ourselves have closed his eyes, have brought the dear relics to their last resting-place, it seems that we must meet the dear departed one whenever we enter the house ; we hear his voice, the fall of his footsteps in the hall, on the stairs ; we cannot believe separation forever to be possible. Thus it is in every common case ; but here were men and women excited by unusual hopes and fears, who had left everything else in this world, and followed their dear master, in whom they had the never-flinching faith that he would introduce the new world, and reign over it in glory, in which they all would participate. This beloved friend and teacher had gone they knew not whither. Was he dead ? It was impossible. Could he have died a common death ? Then he must have been a false prophet, and was justly put to death. It was impossible. Even if he did die, he would rise again and fulfill what he had promised. He will rise ; perhaps he is risen already. The thought was scarcely conceived, when the excited imagination saw the resurrected Christ. Such an excitable spirit as that of Mary Magdalen had to see him first. " She saw him," was spread abroad among the disciples, who had now recovered from their first fright and flight, of which they felt somewhat

ashamed. With their returning confidence and trust, especially as they had to redeem their reputation, what was more natural than that Jesus should soon appear to some or all of the apostles, and, at last, to a multitude of people? Jesus was no longer a false prophet; he was the Messiah, who would soon come again with the new world, "when the last will be the first, and the first last."

Why should such a comforting thought be given up? To remain faithful to the beloved teacher was very pleasing to their expectations. They soon returned to Jerusalem, formed a congregation of the saints, who differed from the other Jews in nothing except the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, and as such would soon return, when the new earth and the new heaven would be founded. Of his doctrines they carried out as much as was possible to be carried out in this miserable world; but the distinguishing points were too insignificant to make them appear as a special sect of the Jews. They would undoubtedly soon have relapsed into the ranks of the other Jews, had not another master-mind taken hold of this new idea of the resurrected Messiah, to lead it victoriously to the conquest of the world. It was Paul who founded Christianity; and as his spirit entirely overshadows that of Jesus in the system of Christianity, we cannot conclude without giving a sketch of this remarkable man.

PAUL.

The actual results of Jesus' life and activity were very insignificant, as the author of the Acts testifies (i. 15), telling us that the adherents of Jesus were no more than 120; while we learn from Josephus, *Antiq.* (Book xx.,

chap. v., sec. 1; chap. viii., sec. 6), that other prophets, who, very soon after Jesus, agitated the people by similar promises, had thousands of enthusiastic followers. Under the leadership of the more prominent disciples of Jesus this little band of the faithful formed a small congregation, or rather community, which led a quiet, unostentatious, communistic life, but did not deviate in the least from the laws of Moses and the doctrines of Judaism, as then taught. Their communism, introduced by Jesus, was quite sufficient to undermine their future existence, for it led to poverty, which, with the accompanying faults and vices, is a dry rot, that will sap the strength and vigor of any society where it has once set in. But, besides, they were occasionally exposed to the petty annoyances and persecutions of some fanatics, who made them suffer for their slight differences those penalties and penances which the church discipline had the authority to inflict. Among these fanatics there was none more zealous than a certain Saul.

Saul was born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, a city renowned for Grecian culture, of which Saul, however, had not even a smattering. When quite a young man, he came to Jerusalem to receive the higher theological training, and was said to have been a pupil of Gamaliel the elder. According to the Jewish customs of those days, his theological pursuits did not relieve him from the obligation of learning a trade; he was a tent-maker, or rather weaver of that coarse tent-cloth called *cilicium*. In Jerusalem he soon showed his inborn fanaticism, by seeking distinction in the persecution of the harmless followers of Jesus, who were called Nazarenes. By his exertions mainly they were scattered from Jerusalem along the coast of Phœnicia, Syria, and Cilicia. But

Saul's fanaticism had no rest; he heard that those scattered from Jerusalem were gathering in the Grecian cities, and he obtained letters from the high priest to the heads of the various synagogues, by which he was authorized to take all Nazarenes, wherever found, and deliver them to the court of Jerusalem, the highest court in religious matters. With these letters he went to Damascus, but before he entered this city a sudden change came over him. He had a vision of the crucified Jesus, and henceforth became as zealous and fanatical in the propagation of the new doctrine as formerly he was in its persecution.

Of this vision the Acts give us three contradictory versions (ix. 3 ff.; xxii. 6 ff.; xxvi. 12 ff.), according to which a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, suddenly shone round about him, and a conversation between him and an apparition took place. The legendary nature of these relations is obvious; the words of Jesus, in one relation, are put into the mouth of Ananias in the other; here the companions of Paul remain standing, there they fall to the ground; in one relation they hear the voice, but see nothing; in the other they see the light, but hear nothing. His own version of this event is simple enough (Gal. i. 12 ff.; I. Cor. xv. 8; ix. 1). He saw Jesus just as all the other apostles had seen him. This gives us a clearer idea of what the apostles have seen, and what the apparitions of the resurrected Jesus were.

Saul's physical constitution was very weak; he was continually complaining of his bodily infirmities, among which there must have been one especially harassing, which he calls "the thorn in his flesh, the messenger of Satan that buffets him" (II. Cor. xii. 7). It was nothing

but the fiery, indomitable spirit within him that could battle against so many hardships, and bear such fatigues as he imposed upon himself. But he had to pay the penalty for it; his whole nervous system was deranged; he was subject to trances and hallucinations, of which he often speaks; for instance (II. Cor. xii. 2 ff.): "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth). How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." A man with such a constitution and disposition had traveled for eight days from Jerusalem, through the desert, and now approached the surroundings of Damascus, described as a garden of God in beauty. There his cruel labors were to begin again. His mind, all the way along, was naturally occupied with his victims, the followers of Jesus, whom they believed to be the Messiah. Of Jesus he knew no more than he had learned from the confessions and ejaculations of those he had persecuted. He had seen the joyful suffering of those who persevered, and heard the recantations which those weaker ones had uttered with trembling lips and agony of mind. He had probably witnessed similar visions of some of his victims, who, in the midst of their suffering, were so carried away by their ecstasy and wrought-up imagination that they saw the heavens open and the resurrected Christ come down with the clouds of the sky, as the Acts (vii. 56) tell us of Stephen. Pondering over all these experiences, his excited brain, wearied nerves, and heated imagination created the same vision; he saw the crucified Jesus whom he persecuted, and at once his passionate soul was thrown into the opposite direction. He came to Damascus, not

as a new man, but with a new faith and new convictions, for which he would do battle with the same energy and the same fiery spirit as he did for the old.

Without conversing with any of the apostles, or taking advice from any of the adherents of Jesus, he at once entered upon his new career of preaching the Gospel of the resurrected Christ, as he understood it, according to his knowledge of the Scriptures and the Jewish traditions. That the Gospel of Jesus and his disciples was quite different from his own was nothing to him.

The disciples of Jesus always held, as did Jesus himself, that the most faithful compliance with the laws of God, as taught by Judaism, were the only preparation for the world that was soon to come by some wonderful divine interposition; then all the concomitant circumstances that were to accompany the time of the Messiah, according to the Jewish traditions—as for instance, the conversion of all nations to the true belief in God—were likewise, by some miraculous powers, to be brought about. In the meantime, Judaism had to be rigorously observed, together with those preparatory doctrines divulged by Jesus. But Paul was not the man to go for instruction to those simple fishermen; he was not to be influenced by any teacher. Jesus had appeared to him just as he had appeared to others, especially to the apostles; he had *his* revelations and visions, and these he was to preach. “Jesus is the Messiah; he was innocently put to death; he has risen again, and will soon return to introduce the world to come.” This was all he knew and wanted to know of Jesus; and it was quite sufficient for him to found a new religion on these premises.

Jesus was the Messiah; then everything expected of

the Messiah must be fulfilled. The Messiah, according to the Jewish traditions, though of the Jews, was to come for all mankind; the whole heathen world, therefore, was now to be gathered within the folds of the new faith. The converted Saul could only become an apostle of the heathen.*

With the coming of the Messiah the Holy Spirit, as promised by the prophets, was to pour itself upon all flesh; and it now did pour itself upon all those who believed in Jesus as the Messiah, who was risen from the dead, and would soon reappear. By embracing this belief every one was created anew and stripped of his former sinfulness.

With these glad tidings he addressed himself to the Gentiles, who, after the appearance of the Messiah, were all to accept the Jewish religious and moral ideas. But the laws and institutions historically connected with, and, to a Jewish mind, inseparable from, these ideas, had no meaning to the heathen; they were a yoke too heavy to be borne. Paul, brought up among the heathen, knew this better than anybody else; and, fortunately, according to the theory that Jesus was the Messiah, the laws were superfluous. Jewish tradition had it that, with the appearance of the Messiah, all laws and institutions would cease. The laws and institutions, therefore, were abolished, and there was no hindrance for

* For the ruling thought of the new apostle, it is very significant that henceforth he always calls himself Paul; it is true, it was quite customary for the Jews of those days to have a Roman name beside their Jewish one, as formerly homophonous Greek names were adopted by many Jews; in this case, however, the adoption of the heathen name was at the same time a declaration of his adoption of heathenism.

receiving the Gentiles into the bosom of the new faith without burdening them with the laws.

He went to Damascus (35 A.C.), and there, to the greatest astonishment of all who had heard of him as the bitterest persecutor of the new sect, he preached, to Jew and Gentile, Christ crucified. For three years he continued his work in Damascus and Arabia, before he went to Jerusalem to confer with the original apostles (38 A.C.) But his self-willed, combative character did not allow a more familiar intercourse with the congregation of the saints. With Peter and James, the brother of Jesus, he had some private conversation, but saw none of the others (Gal. i. 18, 19). The atmosphere in Jerusalem did not suit him, and after two weeks he left for his native city, Tarsus. From thence he was soon called by Barnabas to Antioch, where the corner stone of his great structure was to be laid. Antioch, after Rome and Alexandria, was the largest city of the Roman empire. Situated as it was on the boundary that separated the European from the Asiatic world, it became the conflux of the most various nationalities, the depository of all the vices and corruptions prevalent in both Europe and Asia. Since the time of Alexander almost every nation of these two parts of the globe had contributed to contaminate the very air which Antiochian society breathed ; there heathenism appeared in its most loathsome immorality, but there also were thousands upon thousands thirsting and longing for something better. A large congregation of converted Gentiles was formed ; and here, for the first time, the name of *Christiani* was (mockingly) given to the adherents of Jesus by the witty Antiochians. Antioch, therefore, was the real cradle of Christianity, a name soon adopted by the faithful themselves.

But in Antioch were likewise many Jews and Jew-Christians, who maintained an active correspondence with the mother congregation of Jerusalem. The rumor of what Paul and Barnabas were doing came to Jerusalem, and there were soon great contentions between the Jew-Christians and the Paulines, *i.e.*, the converts of Paul. Paul was accused of teaching *another* gospel; he was declared a heretic, and his converts were told (Acts xv. 1), "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." To allay these controversies, Paul went with Barnabas and Titus, one of his converts, to Jerusalem (52 A.C.) After long disputes, a compromise was agreed upon between Paul and the original apostles, *viz.*: Paul should be received and acknowledged as apostle of the heathen, who might remain free of the law, and be considered "proselytes of the gate"; the disciples of Jesus, however, would continue to labor as apostles of the Jews, for whom the law remained valid and binding.

Such an expedient could not be otherwise than very unsatisfactory. It was soon to be seen, when, shortly afterward, Peter came to Antioch, and, at first, lived and ate with the Gentiles; but withdrew as soon as some of James' church came from Jerusalem and remonstrated with him. This example of Peter, one of the chiefest of the apostles, naturally influenced many of Paul's converts, as even Barnabas had followed Peter. The inconsistency of allowing to the heathen Christians what was prohibited to the Jew-Christians, and the disadvantage under which the newly-founded religion would have to labor by maintaining two separate camps within her pale, were plainly to be seen. It was impossible to gather all the heathen into her folds, as long as

the Jew-Christians, with their observance of the law, remained a kind of aristocracy, who tolerated the large class of the Gentiles only as those who lagged behind. Paul now took a very decisive step, by boldly cutting loose the new religion from its parent trunk Judaism. He declared the Jewish law to be not only superfluous and obsolete, but a hindrance and a curse; the observance of the law to be not only immaterial and unmeritorious, but a sin against the Holy Spirit and the true belief in Christ.

This new departure he had to justify by remodeling his Christology, which, in the manner of those days—to let the Scriptures and traditions tell whatever the ingenuity of the expounder wanted to prove—was no difficult task for a man of Paul's acuteness in combining the remotest ideas. He reasoned thus: Christ, the Messiah, has died, innocently died; to what purpose? Only to take away the sins of mankind. He is the lamb of whom Isaiah (chap. liii.) speaks, who had to be offered for the transgressions of the world. The atoning death of Christ took away our sins, which our own obedience to the law could not accomplish. To what purpose, then, was the law given? It was given to make the world, through the example of the Jews, conscious of their sins; it was the continual reminder of how sinfully man lives, how by his own exertions he can never come up to what God demands of him; it was, therefore, a curse which was only given to prepare mankind for him, who died as a curse (Gal. iii. 13): "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"; through him perfect righteousness may be acquired, which could not be done by observing the law.

Now the Messiah has suffered for our sins, by his death we may obtain righteousness, when we become crucified in him and live anew in him, depending solely on this grace of God, through the sacrifice of his Son. But if we cling to the old law, seeking in it for righteousness by our own exertions, even after the death of Christ, we deny Christ and his innocent death (Gal. ii. 18 ff.): "For if I build again the things which I destroyed I make myself a transgressor. For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." The breach between the new religion and the old was now complete. According to this doctrine it was no longer the accomplished hope of Judaism, but a new religion, of necessity hostile to Judaism.

Such a doctrine was too repulsive to the Jew-Christians to be countenanced. Paul and his Gospel are henceforth most intensely abhorred; he is represented as Balaam, the seducer of the people, and other not very flattering epithets are given to him. This opposition among the Jew-Christians he has to explain to himself and his congregations; the easiest way of explaining it is, "they are blinded," blinded by the will of God; there is such a thing as election (Rom. xi. 7): "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeks for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Thus we have the rejection of Israel as a people, and the election of the Gentiles, as many of them as will

believe; Christianity has abandoned her mother, and thrown herself without reserve upon the heathen world. Henceforth her language is no longer Hebrew or Chaldean, no longer the language of Jesus, but Greek and Latin. The influence of heathenism, the consequence of Paul's doctrines, may be resisted yet a while by the handful of Jew-Christians; but in the course of time they will have to yield. Heathenism more and more absorbs the new religion; and those truths brought over from Judaism are soon lost sight of, for they are swept away or buried under the deluge of Paganism. The new religion has no longer anything in common with Judaism, except whenever she takes her weapons, as her founder Paul always did, from the treasures of the sacred literature of the Jews, to turn them against those who furnished them.



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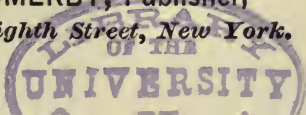
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